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ABSTRACT

This guide provides support for school jurisdictions and schools as they implement school-based decision-making (SBDM) for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. The intended users include school boards, school councils, school staffs, and central-office personnel who wish to create effective SBDM processes and policies, which focus on teaching and learning. The resource guide contains numerous Alberta stories and practical examples of SBDM from jurisdictions around the province. Each chapter includes a focus article written by an Alberta educator. These articles offer an indepth analysis of complex issues of SBDM. General guidelines and practical suggestions from research and current practice follow the focus article. Next, examples of current practice related to the chapter are introduced with the goal of providing a variety of approaches for the reader to consider. Finally, concluding each chapter are workshops intended to strengthen the SBDM knowledge and skills of stakeholders. The guide provides numerous references and information for all members of the school community. (JMD)

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School-Based Decision Making Resource Guide:

Focus on Teaching and Learning

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This document is intended for:

Teachers	✓
Principals	✓
School Councils	✓
Support Staff	✓
Trustees	✓
Secretary Treasurers	✓
Superintendents	✓

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About the Resource Guide

School-Based Decision Making Resource Guide: Focus on Teaching and Learning is designed to provide support for school jurisdictions and schools as they implement school-based decision making (SBDM) for the purpose of improving teaching and learning.

It is written for use by school boards, school councils, school staffs and central office personnel in creating effective school-based decision making processes and policies which focus on teaching and learning.

School jurisdictions, schools and educators across the province are at a variety of stages along a continuum of implementation for school-based decision making.
Some readers may use the guide to compare their progress, others may use it to begin their process. **It is not a prescriptive, step-by-step "how to" manual.**
There are several manuals already available that address this need. In particular, *Decentralization: The Administrator's Guide Book to School District Change* (1991), Daniel J. Brown; *A Facilitators Guide to the Development and Implementation* of *Site-Based Decision Making* (1990), James E. Mitchell; and *A Practical Guide to Effective Site-Based Management* (1994), Larry J. Reynolds are valuable resources.

The resource guide combines theory and practice, and provides some practical models in use around Alberta. It is written in chapters that address major issues within school-based decision making. Each chapter could be considered as an independent unit, however the nature of school-based decision making is complex. Often the issues overlap, and some of the concepts and ideas are repeated from chapter to chapter.

Each chapter begins with a short introduction and summary which connect it to other chapters within the guide. Most chapters include a focus article written by an Alberta educator, adding a provincial perspective to the research. These articles provide in-depth analysis of some of the critical complex issues of SBDM. For example, Garry McKinnon's article in Chapter Two provides a review of the literature. The articles may be used as a starting point for discussion as well as to provide an Alberta focus.

The focus article is followed by some general guidelines and practical suggestions from research and current practice. These may be used to assist with the development of policy and process for schools and jurisdictions that are in the developmental stage of SBDM or as a reference check for those at the implementation phase.

Next, several samples of current practice related to the chapter are introduced. The purpose of these is to provide a variety of approaches for the reader to consider. The reader may also wish to call the contact person to obtain more detailed information and assistance.

Finally, the chapter includes workshop ideas related to the issues being addressed. The workshops are presented in detail and could be used by groups at various stages of the SBDM continuum.

Readers who have samples of current practices or workshop ideas that they wish to submit are invited to send them for inclusion in revisions or updates to the resource guide. Please consider this a work in progress — ask questions about the material — agree or disagree with it — write all over it — make changes and additions. Send us your ideas and improvements. There may be no one best way, but together we can continually improve our practice.

The resource guide is intended to support schools and school jurisdictions as they develop their models for SBDM. This document makes references to other Alberta Education manuals and support documents such as *Meeting the Challenge: Three-Year Plan for Education in Alberta*, *School Council Resource Manual*, *Guide for Developing School Board Three-Year Education Plans*, *Annual Education Results Report*, and the Alberta Teachers' Association publication *Partners in Learning*.

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A publication such as the *School-Based Decision Making Resource Guide: Focus on Teaching and Learning* depends upon many people for its success.

Alberta Education wishes to thank all of those who contributed material for the resource guide. Your contributions made the material unique to Alberta, greatly enhancing the value of the resource.

In particular, Alberta Education acknowledges:

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

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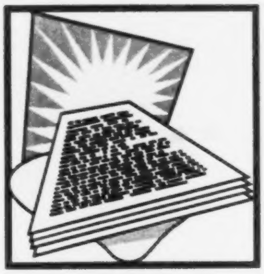
Introduction and Background



Focus Article

Tested in Alberta

Workshop Idea

Chapter One

Introduction

Alberta Education believes that major decisions about policies, instructional programs and services, and the allocation of funds to support them must be made collaboratively. School-based decision making should involve collaboration among the principal, superintendent, teachers, support staff, parents and the community in keeping with the policies of the board of trustees. School-based decision making enables schools to be responsive to local needs.

Under Section 15 of the *School Act*, and the direction set by the Three-Year Business Plan, the principal is the key educational leader at the school level, who will provide leadership in successful school-based decision making. Principals must work with parents, teachers and members of the community to establish a school-based decision-making process to develop school policies and budgets, as well as to establish the scope of the school program and extra-curricular activities. Establishing an integral relationship among teaching, learning and the decision-making process should result in higher levels of student performance.

Alberta Education supports excellence in teaching and learning, and the involvement of parents and the community in the education of students.

Meeting the Challenge: Three-Year Business Plan — 1994/95-1996/97, p.11

Goal 2 — Provide more choice and increase parental involvement:

- Enable parents and teachers to have a meaningful role in decisions about policy, programs, budgets and activities.
- Encourage increased parental involvement in their children's learning.

Goal 5 — Restructure education system:

- Revise legislation.
- Establish school-based budget and program decision making.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities.

Alberta Education

Alberta Education Policy statement:

A school and its community shall have the authority and the support to make decisions which directly impact on the education of students and shall be accountable for the results.

Procedures

1. Each school board shall develop, keep current, and implement written policy and procedures for school-based decision making consistent with provincial policy and procedures. These shall be a matter of public record, available upon request.
2. School board policy and procedures for school-based decision making shall:
    (1) be applicable to all schools in the jurisdiction but provide for the flexible approaches of school-based decision making;

    (2) focus on teaching and learning;

    (3) encourage input from all staff, parents and the community into school-based decisions on programs, instructional services, extra-curricular activities and the allocation of funds to support them;

    (4) include goals, objectives and expected outcomes for school-based decision making;

    (5) identify the types of decisions expected to be made at the school level;

    (6) ensure through established criteria for funding an equitable allocation of funds which respects differences in school populations;

    (7) define the roles, responsibilities and relationships with a focus on broad distribution of power and authority for decision-making among all participants: principal, teachers, instructional support staff, parents, school councils, the community, central office and the board of trustees;

    (8) provide for a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the school-based decision making process in place in its schools;

    (9) define procedures for widespread communication and information sharing among stakeholders, including: appropriate involvement in school-based planning, evaluating and reporting processes;

    (10) include guidelines for inservice and professional development opportunities for staff and school council members to facilitate changes in roles and responsibilities including: problem solving, management, and communication skills of all stakeholders;

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(11) be consistent with *School Councils* (Policy 1.8.3) and regulations; and

(12) be consistent with *Services for Students and Children* (Policy 1.8.1).

3. A school board, with staff and school council members, should develop an inservice and professional development plan to support implementation of school-based decision making. This plan may be developed in collaboration with the regional professional development consortium.

— Alberta Education Policy,
January 1996

The move toward more local decision making in schools is supported in the following activities and documents:

- The Task Force on Roles and Responsibilities, 1993–94
- *Roles and Responsibilities in Education: A Position Paper*, 1994
- Amendments to the *School Act* which make school councils mandatory (Section 17).
- *"Meeting the Challenge: Three-Year Business Plan — 1994/95–1996/97,"* Goal 5, to restructure the education system.

Recommendation to Alberta Government

In developing educational policy:

- *Recognize and facilitate the right and responsibility of teachers to make decisions about the education of the children in their charge, in light of their expertise, experience and the specific circumstances of their students and community.*
- *Support a model of school administration that is collegial, collaborative and facilitative and that gives staff ongoing, effective involvement in the decisions affecting them.*
- *Develop genuine consultative structures that give parents and teachers meaningful input into decisions about education at the provincial level.*

— The Alberta Teachers' Association, *Trying to Teach: Necessary Conditions* (1994)

The principal of a successful school is not the instructional leader but the coordinator of teachers as instructional leader.

— Carl Glickman, *Renewing America's Schools:. A Guide for School Based Action* (1993)

Background to SBDM in Alberta

The primary reason for implementing SBDM is to improve teaching and learning. The involvement of teachers, parents, students and the wider community in meaningful decision-making processes is critical.

The development of a school-based decision-making model or process is not the goal, but the means of achieving a broader goal — to provide the best learning opportunity for all students in the school.

School-based decision making is not a completely new concept. Many of the underlying principles can be found in previous educational initiatives. In 1903, John Dewey recognized the need for teacher involvement. "Until the public system is organized in such a way that every teacher has some regular and representative way . . . (to) register judgement upon matters of educational importance — with the assurance that this judgement will somehow affect the school system — the assertion that the present system is not democratic seems to be justified."

In Alberta, several school jurisdictions implemented models of school-based decision making in advance of the 1994 initiative of Alberta Education. Edmonton Public School District began a pilot program in 1976 as part of a restructuring of the school system by shifting decision making and budgeting authority to seven schools. Today, more than 87 per cent of the district's operating budget is controlled by the schools within the Edmonton Public School District. Edmonton Public School District is viewed as a leader in school-based budgeting in North America.

Several other jurisdictions developed school-based decision-making models in the late 1980s.

Fort McMurray Public initiated the concept in 1986. After 11 years, superintendent John Waddell says that there is no one best way and certainly no template for others to copy. It is a process of negotiation and refinement as the participants work together to make improvements. Waddell says, in some ways, school-based decision making has brought about a greater degree of cooperation among schools in the jurisdiction and an increased understanding of the needs of the whole system.

Fort McMurray Catholic schools have been involved in school-based decision making since 1988. Superintendent Dan McIsaac says, "Overall it has been a positive experience. I believe that school staffs generally would be very reluctant to move away from this model."

SBDM is a philosophy and a way of thinking and acting, not a program to be implemented.

— Garry McKinnon,
School Based Decision Making Resource Guide: Focus on Teaching and Learning (1997)

Successful schools are places where the larger questions about educational practices are constantly kept in the forefront of meeting and conversation.

— Carl Glickman,
Renewing America's Schools: A guide for School Based Action (1993)

The need for clear policies that strike a balance between autonomy and control at the district level is a great challenge.

— Carl Glickman,
Renewing America's Schools: A guide for School Based Action (1993)

Northern Lights School Division, developed the model in 1988 when the jurisdiction was Lakeland Public School District. It was modified to suit the expanded jurisdiction in 1995. In support of the model, Assistant Superintendent Richard Welsh says, "There is nothing really new about SBDM. School administration, staff and parents have always wanted to make decisions about those things that affect them and now they can."

School-based decision making may be adopted for a variety of reasons:

- to improve student learning
- to provide input from a broad range of stakeholders
- to restructure the system and move to decentralization
- to change the decision-making structure
- to reduce inefficiencies and overlap of services.

School-based decision making in Alberta should be examined along a continuum of implementation. Jurisdictions and schools can benefit from sharing experiences and successes for improving teaching and learning. This resource guide includes some of these experiences and successes.

Purpose of school-based decision making:

- *improve the instructional program*
- *enhance student learning*
- *provide opportunity for restructuring.*

— James E. Mitchell,
A Facilitator's Guide to the Development and Implementation of Site-based Decision Making (1990)

There are two broad conclusions . . . First, sustained improvement requires serious restructuring of the school, the district and their relationships . . . Second, and less obvious but equally important is that schools cannot redesign themselves. The role of the district is crucial.

— Michael Fullan,
The New Meaning of Educational Change (1991)

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Edmonton School District No. 7

Emery Dosdall, Superintendent

There is a system of accountability in Edmonton Public Schools which allows those who are responsible for results, the principals, the necessary decision-making authority to make the crucial decisions about how best to conduct the teaching and learning process. These decisions are best made by those who are closest to where teaching and learning take place.

The process for site-based decision making has been well documented in our district and has evolved to ensure plans are developed for schools in consultation with school staffs and their communities.

When I started consulting with staff and parents in 1994, they told me that although Edmonton had done a good job in defining the processes for site-based decision making, we needed to combine the power and potential of this governance structure by instituting a second revolution.

The second half of the revolution is making school-site decision making work for us in a way that positively impacts student achievement.

The vision addresses all stakeholders: students, staff, parents, community and the board. At the core of this vision are high levels of student achievement and satisfaction with schooling.

Improving student achievement must be the number one priority for a school district and its staff. Staff need to feel that their individual efforts make a difference to the learning of students and that there is a direct correlation between their work in the classroom and community support for public education.

If the community is not satisfied with the achievement results of our schools, they will choose to lend their support to private and charter schools. The biggest threat to public education in the nineties is self-induced mediocrity.

In order for us to meet our district targets for improved student achievement, staff members must understand how their work impacts student achievement.

There is no more important work in a school district than the work of the school — and so, the principalship is the most crucial leadership role in the district. The rest of us — me included — work in service of schools — helping the principals to be successful.

In our central office — called, significantly — Central Services, we have streamlined our administration by asking the question: does this position support the work of the schools?

In our restructuring, we consistently inquired: how does this help schools and children succeed? In an era of reduced funding and government scrutiny of administrative spending, it's a very important question — one that we answered with confidence and action.

As part of our restructuring we have abandoned the notion that central administration can solve school-based problems more effectively than those who work there. We noted that even after many years of decentralized decision making, we were talking about principals, not with them — that's all changed.

No organization can expect such high levels of accountability and improvements from staff without creating an infrastructure which supports their work. A highly decentralized decision-making organization requires the right things to remain centralized. I like to think of this as decentralized empowerment and centralized headaches (or support). We have a fundamental belief that the most critical work in our district is done in the classroom.

Edmonton Public Schools, with its 116 year history, has and will continue to invent the future of public education. This is not easy work. And we still have lots of work to do. The development of standards in all areas of our work is one of our next steps.

When we first implemented school-site decision making, it was with the belief that student achievement would increase with increased staff empowerment. We have learned that this is not a natural outcome.

Creating the vision is only the first step. Building the team to realize the vision is another critical component. Monitoring our results and being willing to make necessary adjustments along the way is essential to our success.

At Edmonton Public Schools, we believe that it is imperative to unclutter the public education mandate and restore a passion for teaching and learning to the heart of our work.

Vision Statement

Students	Staff	Parents	Community	Board
High levels of achievement and satisfaction with schooling Record numbers earning scholarships Record numbers entering post-secondary institutions Record numbers completing courses and schooling Sought out by post-secondary institutions and employers	Confidence in the board, the district, themselves and their school Are principled and behave with integrity Highly trained, skilled and motivated Skilled self-evaluators and critical self-appraisers Service oriented Feel valued and respected by the organization Manage district resources effectively and efficiently	Express high levels of satisfaction with their child's school, the school staff, other district schools and all district staff Partners in the school and district Advocate for the district Express high levels of confidence in the district, our programs and our staff	Believe district's financial and human resources are effectively utilized and the physical resources are well-maintained High level of confidence in the district Recognize a culture of continuous improvement High level of confidence in standards of student conduct, behavior and safety Willing to contribute to further improvements Believe we are preparing students for productive work and effective citizenship	Highly regarded by staff, parents and community Seen as exemplars by province and other boards Cited for exemplary practices Few complaints from parents and community

A Rationale for School-Based Decision Making

Bob O'Reilly, Associate Dean, University of Calgary

> *School-based management should not be perceived as a goal but rather as a means of effecting school improvement. When the view of making schools better is kept in the forefront, school-based management should result in significant, positive results.*
>
> — J. G. Delaney, "*Schools Run by Stakeholders: an overview of school based management*" Prism (Spring 1994)

Neil Postman, in his book The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School, points out that in any enterprise, and especially in education, there are always two levels of discourse. One level is that of "techne," or the techniques used to achieve goals. Postman uses the word "engineering" to describe this level. Within the domain of the engineering of schooling we are concerned with effective teaching, and occasionally we search for the best approach, although in fact our experience has shown that there are many ways to teach in an effective manner. School-based decision making concerns itself with the techne (the chain of means and ends between the goals and the expected outcomes) of schooling. It concerns goals, school management, curriculum, good teaching, student motivation and learning, allocation of resources, evaluation and ways of linking school and community. To the extent that the policies and regulations concerning funding, teacher certification and evaluation, curriculum and laws governing the management of schools permit, personnel at the level of the school are being encouraged to take responsibility for making technical education and managerial decisions concerning their school.

A close examination of SBDM places it squarely in the evolutionary processes of administrative theory and of educational administration. In contrast to the teachings of Frederick Taylor, who held that experts should divine the best way for workers to conduct a task, and that methods and processes should be the province of senior management, modern management theory has adopted an ancient dictum called *the principle of subsidiarity*. This principle states that no decision should be made at a senior level of organization if the decision can be made at least as effectively at a junior level.

Related to this principle is the belief that schools and the communities that they serve are one of the building blocks of society. As students bring their lives into the schools, schools are in unique positions to assess the needs of their students. These needs, as well as strategies to meet the needs, are to be communicated to the next higher level of society. For practical purposes, this next level is the school board. The individual school, then, is the beginning point for assessing educational needs, for determining educational policy and for determining the resources required to provide effective programs. This concept places the school at the top of the educational pyramid and requires other levels (school board and ministry) to serve the needs of the school.

SBDM is also in the tradition of modern American management theory which has evolved over the past 50 years. These theories suggest that workers (teachers and students) must be trusted and must know that they are trusted and can discuss problems occurring within the organization without fear of any repercussion or sanction; that members of the organization are supported as they attempt to improve their skills; that communication in organizations (schools) flows freely, not only from manager to worker, but also from worker to manager and among workers; that decisions are made closest to the point where the decision has impact and by people who have first-hand information and who will be affected by the decision; that everyone participates in the setting of goals which are reasonable and attainable, yet stretch all participants to strive for excellence; and that indicators concerning the main activities of the organization are collected and shared by all concerned.

The second level in Neil Postman's analysis, however, moves much deeper into the role of the school. What visions should there be for the role of the school? What should students be learning? How should students be living? How should schools intervene in the lives of young people to assist them to live their lives, to make decisions about their lives and their environments and to plan their futures? What aspects of the local community and what living conditions of the students should the school address in order for it to effectively intervene in the living and learning of students. However, SBDM is not just the means of effectively transforming decisions made at higher levels of society; each school is entitled to, and required to, search for the goals that will best meet the needs of its students.

For this reason alone, schools must include in their constituency parents and other members of the community in the decision-making processes. Certainly parent and community members can assist the school in its efficiency goals at the technical level of operating the school. More important, however, is the advice, information and prompting by parents and community members in setting goals for the school. It is from creative thinking at this level that many good schools have gone on to devise extraordinary programs for their students. Wisely conducted, this process of bringing parents and community members into the school will have other dividends, not least in the social and political support that the local school will generate within the community and beyond.

Both the visionary level and the technical level are crucial in discussing school topics of teaching, curriculum, evaluation, discipline, staff development and communications. SBDM can be a powerful tool in creating schools that make differences in the community.

Strategies for Success:

- *Establish many teacher-led decision teams*
- *Focus on continuous improvement — curriculum and instruction*
- *Well-developed communication system*
- *Reward behavior that helps to achieve goals*
- *Select principals who can facilitate and manage change*
- *Use national or state guidelines to focus the reform — curricular and instruction.*

Based on research of 44 schools in 13 school districts, 500 people interviewed.

— Taken from Priscilla Wohlstetter, "Getting School-Based Management Right, What Works and What Doesn't" *Phi Delta Kappan* (September 1995)

Why School-Based Decision Making Fails:

- Adopted as an end in itself
- Principals work from their own agendas
- Decision-making power in a single command
- Business proceeds as usual
- Protection of turf
- Unclear roles and expectations
- Superficial understanding
- Token implementation.

Critical Elements in School-Based Decision

Making: An Overview

Each of these elements is described in detail in the chapters of this resource guide:

- A climate of respect, trust and open communication should be developed and nurtured.
- The central purpose is the enhancement of student learning; all policies and processes reflect the central purpose.
- Real decision-making authority and responsibility shifts to those who are responsible for implementing the decisions and/or those who are affected by the decision.
- Understanding and commitment to the philosophy and process shared by all participants — teachers, support staff, parents, administrators, students, trustees, central office personnel and community members.
- The district vision and goals are developed or rewritten in a collaborative manner to reflect a school-based decision making philosophy. Policy is examined for congruency.
- A plan for the implementation of SBDM is in place. Time, support and clear communication about the plan are essential.
- Maintaining a system perspective is important. Decisions at a school or other site in the jurisdiction are made within the total picture of education within the jurisdiction. Clear parameters or boundaries for decisions are established in a collaborative manner involving all the stakeholders. Care is taken to eliminate destructive competition.
- There is a clear understanding of the new roles and responsibilities for school councils, school staffs and the community in education decision making.
- A collaborative process is used to determine which decisions are made centrally and which are school-based decisions. This element asks the critical SBDM questions: who makes what decisions and how are the decisions made? It is important to involve all stakeholders in making this determination; it is time-consuming but critical.
- Much of the decision making shifts to the schools. This obviously connects to the previous element, but it is important that real decision-making authority be given to the school community.

Guiding Principles for Implementation of Site-Based Decision Making:

- *Those who mandate process should not hold others accountable for the results*
- *The principalship is the most crucial leadership position in the district*
- *The most crucial work in the district is done by teachers in the classroom*
- *Resources are allocated to the schools in a public manner and this process must be seen to be fair and equitable*
- *Monitoring of results in schools must be carried out by the district or the province*
- *Key results achieved are reported to parents, board, public and the province*
- *Results achieved form the basis for school improvement plans*
- *School Plans are developed in consultation with parents, community, staff and, where appropriate, students*
- *Good decentralization requires good centralization*
- *District priorities provide clear direction to schools about what is important to achieve*
- *Lines of communication are open*
- *Rules and regulations are minimal, but where they exist they are enforced*
- *Central staff are service oriented*
- *Decisions taken centrally about how schools operate are kept to a minimum.*

— Edmonton Public Schools

- The decision makers at the school have a clear understanding of the nature of the decisions that are now their responsibility and within their authority. There is the possibility for a school community to chart a direction that may be different from other schools in the jurisdiction.

- There is a process for exemption to board policies and rules. This should not be an easy or simple process, but the procedure for an exemption should be available. This hinges on understanding the jurisdiction's vision and goals and a well-researched and documented proposal.

- A shared decision-making model is in place at the school level. This model may differ from school to school but should include:
  - a school improvement plan
  - a budget process driven by the school vision and plan
  - a collaborative culture that is organized around a problem-solving approach that uses teams
  - effective communication within and external to the school
  - involvement of the people closest to the decision in making and implementing the decision
  - a flexible structure to facilitate involvement
  - time and support for changing roles and responsibilities
  - a process for constant evaluation and reporting.

- Professional development, inservice and training for all participants as individuals and groups is essential. The changes involved in SBDM (changes in culture and attitude, changes in process and action, changes in roles and responsibilities, and changes in skills for participants) require adequate professional development for all groups; time and money should be made available.

Definitions of School-Based Decision Making

A number of terms are used in the literature and policy manuals to describe the initiative:

- school-based management
- school-based decision making
- site-based decision making
- collaborative decision making
- school-based budgets
- decentralized decision making
- decentralized governance
- participative leadership.

The term used in this resource guide as in Alberta Education's policy document is school-based decision making. This also is the term used in the policy manuals of most school jurisdictions.

> "School-based decision making" involves the whole school community in teaching and learning in order to ensure high levels of student achievement. School-based decision making is a process through which major decisions are made at the school level about policies, instructional programs and services and how funds are allocated to support them; and
>
> "Community" means a school's students, their parents and other community-based support elements available to the school.
>
> — Alberta Education Policy 1.8.2 (1996 01 09)

Definitions that are widely used as models follow.

The following definition gives some direction to the types of decisions and suggests that not all participants will be involved in all decisions. It does not specify the participants but emphasizes the key relationship of responsibilities and decision making.

- SBDM is a process in which a variety of members of the school community collaborate, where appropriate, in identifying problems, defining goals, formulating policy, shaping direction and ensuring implementation. Those individuals who are responsible for the implementation of a decision at the building level are actively and legitimately involved in making the decision.

—James E. Mitchell,
A Facilitator's Guide to Site-Based Decision Making (1990)

Palliser Regional Division No. 26:

With the welfare of students as the primary aim, SBDM is a process whereby greater responsibility for local governance, resource allocation and outcomes is moved to the site.

Consistent with Palliser Regional School Board philosophy and policies, a variety of committed members of the school community collaborate, where appropriate, to identify needs, define goals, formulate policy, shape direction, ensure implementation and assess outcomes.

Edmonton RCSSD No. 7:

Site-based decision making is a process in which people who implement and are affected by the decision, participate in a collegial and cooperative manner in making those decisions.

Wolf Creek Regional Division No. 32:

Site-based decision making is a form of governance in which school personnel, parents, community members, trustees and central office staff work together to provide the programs, services, support and environment that will enable all students to experience success.

This definition combines all of the major elements of school-based decision making and provides an effective checklist for a model.

- A research-based, committed, structured and decentralized method of operating the school district within understood parameters and staff roles to maximize resource effectiveness by transferring the preponderant share of the entire school system's budget, along with corresponding decision-making power, to the local schools on an equitable lump-sum basis. This is based upon a differentiated per pupil allocation to be spent irrespective of source in the best interests of the students in those schools according to a creative local school plan and local school budget developed by the principal collaboratively with trained staff, parents and students as stakeholders, and approved by the superintendent. Such plans are designed to achieve approved goals of improving education by placing accountability at the individual school and evaluated more by results than by methodology.

— Richard Neal, *School Based Management: a detailed guide for successful implementation* (1991)

Another definition to note is the one used in an article describing the process of definition building.

- Shared decision-making is a process designed to "push" education decisions to the school level where those closest to the children may apply their expertise to making decisions that promote school effectiveness and ensure that the most appropriate services are provided to students and the school community.

— Scott C. Bauer, "Myth, Consensus and Change," *The Executive Educator* (1994)

The following definition illustrates a formal structure that includes a variety of participants.

- School-based management can be viewed as a formal alteration of governance structures, as a form of decentralization that identifies the individual school as the primary unit of improvement and relies on the redistribution of decision-making authority as the primary means through which improvements might be stimulated and sustained. Some formal authority to make decisions in the domains of budget, personnel, and program is delegated to and often distributed among site-level actors. Some formal structure (council, committee, team, board) often composed of principals, teachers, parents and, at times, students and community residents, is created so that site participants can be directly involved in school-wide decision making.

—B. Malen, R. Ogawa, & J. Kranz, "What do we know about School-Based Management?," *Choice and Control in American Schools* (1990)

Grande Prairie School District No. 2357:

SBDM is a process in which appropriate members of a school community collaborate in identifying areas needing improvement, researching alternatives, defining goals, formulating solutions, accepting responsibilities and ensuring actions that enhance teaching and learning. Those who are responsible for implementing a decision at the school are actively and legitimately involved in making the decision.

Wild Rose School Division No. 66:

For the educational benefit of all students in Wild Rose School Division, SBDM is collaborative, decentralized management whereby, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, personnel responsible for the implementation of the decisions at the building or unit level are actively involved in making the decisions to achieve the outcomes for which they are responsible.

Golden Hills Regional Division No. 15:

School-based leadership is a decision process in which school staff members, parents and students are collaboratively involved in the decision-making process. School-based decision making should facilitate program improvements and student learning, and allow for continuous personal and professional growth. Through school-based decision making, members of the school community will have the opportunities to be involved in the process of assessing needs, establishing goals, developing resources and being accountable to the stakeholders.

Holy Spirit RCS Regional Division No. 4:

School improvement that is mission-statement driven is the ultimate goal of school-based decision making. It is a continuous process of collaboration that enables key decisions to be made at the local school. The school-based decision-making process centres the identification of goals and opportunities, the search for alternatives, the planning for outcomes and the allocation of resources with those closest to, and most affected by, the outcome of the decisions.

An analysis of the definitions and terms reveals three common elements:

- the shift/exchange and balance of decision-making authority with regard to autonomy and accountability
- the consensus that those closest to, most impacted by or primarily responsible for any decision implementation should be the decision makers
- the empowerment and involvement of principals, teachers, other staff and community in decision making.

One of the key factors in successful school-based decision making is building consensus around a definition of the process. The definition that a jurisdiction and/or school develops may not be much different than the samples given here, but the definition building provides commitment and understanding of the process.

The following workshop describes a process which groups can use to develop or refine a definition for SBDM in their jurisdiction.

Workshop Idea #1: Building or Revising a Definition and Identifying Critical Elements of SBDM

Purpose: to initiate discussion and involvement
to introduce participants to the theory
to build or revise the group's definition of SBDM
to identify critical elements of SBDM

Materials: chart paper, pens, sets of articles

Time: 2 hours

Orientation About SBDM

In groups of four or five, participants complete a jigsaw activity using current and baseline articles about school-based decision making.

Possible choices:

- "Myth, Consensus Making," Scott Bauer, *The Executive Educator* (1994).
- "Getting School Based Decision Making Right," Priscilla Wohlstetter, *Phi Delta Kappan* (September 1995).
- "Who, What and Why of Site-Based Management," Jane L. David, *Educational Leadership* (December 1995/January 1996).
- "The Road to Classroom Change," Thomas R. Guskey & Ken D. Peterson, *Educational Leadership* (December 1995/January 1996).
- "Synthesis of Research on School-Based Management," Jane L. David, *Educational Leadership* (May 1989).
- "Making School-Based Management Work," Eleanor Odden & Priscilla Wohlstetter, *Educational Leadership* (February 1995).

To Start

- select four articles
- divide participants into groups of four
- give each member of the group a different article to read

These groups are called "home groups" and participants have 10–15 minutes to read and understand their article. Focus on the following:

- What are the critical elements of SBDM?
- What is the definition of SBDM in the article?

Next

Participants regroup so that those with the same article are in the same group. This group becomes the "expert group". They discuss the article they have read and ways of explaining the main points of the article to their home group.

Revising a definition

If a group has not examined their definition of SBDM or if the group initially uses a definition borrowed from someone else, it is useful to check it for validity. Does it say what we are doing? Does it include all partners? Is it clear? The jigsaw activity could be used to look for improvements and a review of process.

Finally

The home groups reassemble and each member explains his or her article to the rest of the group. Each group then makes a list of the critical elements of SBDM.

Writing Definitions in Small Groups

Using the critical aspects discovered in step one and some sample definitions from the resource guide (pages 12–13), individually or in pairs draft a definition which will be presented to the small group. Each small group then produces a definition to present to the large group.

Similarities and Differences

Compare the definitions pointing out similar features.

Task Team to Write Definitions

Have a small group of three to four volunteers synthesize the definitions into a first draft.

Synthesis of Critical Elements

Small groups present their lists as developed in step one. Discuss the lists and develop a common set of elements. These should guide the group in the development of a plan to implement SBDM.

Review the Draft Definition

At the next meeting, review and make necessary changes to the definition and to the list of critical elements. Keep working on the document until people are satisfied with the definition and the list.

Implementation

The critical elements serve as a checklist in implementing SBDM. Small task groups can be responsible for each element.

Chapter 2

Establishing School-Based Decision Making

School-Based Decision Making Resource Guide:

Focus on Teaching and Learning

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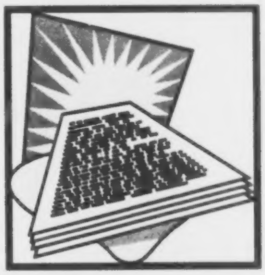
Establishing School-Based Decision Making



Focus Article

Tested in Alberta

Workshop Idea

Chapter Two

Introduction

The cornerstone of this chapter is the focus article "Developing Site-Based Leadership" by Garry McKinnon, superintendent of the Golden Hills Regional Division. The article includes a general discussion about:

- establishing the purpose for school-based decision making
- the change process
- obstacles to the process
- roles and responsibilities
- leadership for school-based decision making.

It also includes a specific rationale for using the model of a thoughtful classroom as the basis of a school-based decision-making model with the purpose of improving teaching and learning.

This chapter also contains examples and models for implementing school-based decision making from:

- Wolf Creek Regional Division
- Palliser Regional Division
- Elk Island Public Schools Regional Division
- Parkland School Division
- Calgary RCSS District
- Lethbridge School District
- Grasslands Regional Division.

Although there is no one process for establishing school-based decision making in a school jurisdiction, it might be useful to examine a sample checklist and set of steps that could be used for discussion or validation. These are available on pages 47–53.

The workshop section uses this checklist to demonstrate a process for initiating the innovation or checking and validating an existing model.

Developing Site-Based Leadership

Garry McKinnon, Superintendent,
Golden Hills Regional Division No. 15

In recent decades there have been many proposals for reforming education but, in most cases, the attempts to bring about change have been described as "bandwagons" which, in the final analysis, have resulted in no significant change. Gibboney (1991) documents the lack of success in over 30 school reform efforts between 1960 and 1990 (see sidebar).

Goodlad (1984) completed a comprehensive report on school reform of the early 1980s. He concludes that while attempts to bring about change were made at top levels, reform was failing to produce an impact at the most critical level — the classroom.

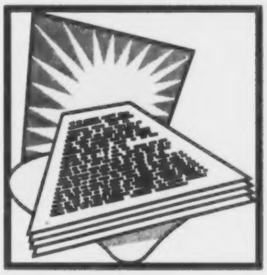
Is site-based decision making another bandwagon which will come and go with little or no significant impact in the classroom — where it really matters? Time will tell. I believe, based on the changes associated with site-based decision making which I have observed in recent years, that this is more than a passing fad in education. In fact, site-based decision making is an attempt to operationalize much of what we have learned through the years about effective schools.

The essence, I believe, of site-based decision-making is the belief that schools have primary responsibility for teaching students; therefore, stakeholders at the school level should be meaningfully involved in setting priorities and allocating resources needed in the classroom for the benefit of students. Site-based decision-making is a philosophical approach to educational leadership which has great potential for positively impacting learning and teaching.

An Operational Definition of Site-Based Decision Making

The response to site-based decision-making has been mixed. Some see it as representing what is already in place and they welcome the recognition of empowering decision-makers at the school level while others fear that decision-making responsibility is being downloaded.

No doubt, there is a need to ensure that the term "site-based decision making" is clearly understood or we will experience the same debilitating forces that have been associated with the implementation of other initiatives in education. Its full potential could also be lost if it is seen as a program to be implemented, rather than a philosophy and a way of thinking and acting.



There has been no fundamental widespread reform in what is taught and how it is taught or in the organizational structure of the school that could support learning and teaching. There has been no pendulum swing in reform because the clock the pendulum drives has yet to be invented.

— Gibboney,
"The Killing Field of Reform,"
Phi Delta Kappan (1991)

Several innovative approaches seem to take a bolder look at reform than is typically the case: Peters and Waterman (1982) propose replacing the rational top-down approach with a social management model, which provides for ownership and involvement in the change process.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Rosenholtz (1990) describe the need to build a culture for change.

Other educational scholars prescribe learning and change that is rooted in action. (Petrie 1981, Schön 1987). For example, Petrie (1990) describes a "second wave" of reform in which teachers are reflective practitioners, with a focus on meaning-making and meaningfulness.

Providing the setting and incentives through site-based decision making, to me, involves:

- enhancing decision making by empowering those who are in the best position to make decisions
- emphasizing the meaningful involvement of students, staff, parents and community members (as opposed to mindless involvement in which there is no ownership, responsibility or accountability)
- promoting learning and professional growth
- having a vision, common goals and expectations, and working toward them
- providing resources commensurate with the responsibilities which have been delegated
- measuring accomplishments and having a sense of being accountable for the results.

In reflecting on the philosophy, I prefer to think in terms of "site-based" rather than "school-based" decision making, because the school is only one of the sites involved in the challenge of providing the setting and the incentives for doing thoughtfully and humanely the work of the mind. I also prefer to use the term "site-based leadership" rather than "site-based decision making" because it reflects my belief that the emphasis should be on leadership as opposed to management. Reynolds (1993) refers to a study demonstrating the differences in the leadership and management perspective (see sidebar).

My personal idiosyncrasies in regard to terminology reflect the importance of language and the need to have a clear understanding of what we are trying to do.

Establishing the Purpose of Site-Based Leadership — The Enhancement of Student Learning

Gibboney (1987) observes that "leadership in education must be rooted in the fundamental enlightenment of thought. The intellectual and moral centre of education is learning and teaching" (p. 29).

Petrie (1990) supports the view that there is a need for a kind of knowledge that is rooted in action. He describes the teacher as a reflective practitioner exercising professional judgment in varying contexts and teaching and learning as meaning-making rather than some sort of casual production of something in the learner by the teacher.

Rexford Brown (1987) describes the ultimate goal of education as **"providing the setting and the incentive for doing thoughtfully and humanely the work of the mind"** (p. 49). This, I believe, is where the real potential of site-based management lies.

The management perspective is associated with predictability and order; detailed steps in planning and budgeting; creating an organizational structure and controlling people by pushing them in the right direction.

The leadership perspective emphasizes change processes; creating a vision and empowering individuals to achieve it and motivating and inspiring by focusing on basic needs and values (p. 9).

— L. J. Reynolds, *A Practical Guide to Effective Site-Based Management* (1993)

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Smith (1986) suggests that we do away with the belief that experts outside of the classroom can make better decisions about helping students learn than the teachers who work directly with their students. He suggests that the control for learning has to return to teachers and that there is a need to shift the focus of learning from simply teaching students to have the right answer to teaching them the process by which educated people pursue the right answers. These thoughts reflect, in my view, the fundamental element of site-based leadership — a focus on learning and teaching. There are various sites to consider in site-based management (central administration, transportation, school facility maintenance and operation, and the school) but the primary site is the classroom. In site-based management we need to direct our attention to promoting and supporting what I would describe as a "thoughtful classroom" (see sidebar).

Fundamental to an understanding of site-based leadership is an understanding of the thoughtful classroom. These key elements of learning and teaching are also the key elements of leadership at all levels and at all sites. Schlechty (1990) uses the term "participatory leadership" to describe what I would consider to be the essence of site-based leadership — "creating conditions in which ideas in their most compelling form can flow up and down the organization in a manner similar to the thoughtful classroom with the teacher and student sharing the leadership role" (p. 49).

Site-based leadership, I have concluded, must have as its primary goal the improvement of learning and teaching. There are too many examples in the literature (as Guskey and Peterson [1995] point out) in which attention is given to matters which do not have a significant impact on the classroom. Educational leaders must always raise the question "how does this impact the classroom?"

In a thoughtful classroom:

- teachers organize learning activities based on student individual needs
- the student is a partner in learning
- resources used in learning experiences are based on the student's capacity to learn
- the emphasis is on problem solving and thinking — rather than single answers, alternate solutions are generated
- students are seen as theory builders and negotiators
- assessment focuses on how a student learns and what a student can do
- assessment is ongoing for purposes of instructional decision making
- questions are valued
- students are collaborators in their own learning.

Implementing the Site-Based Leadership Philosophy

1. Understanding the Change Process

In building on the foundation of the thoughtful classroom as a model for site-based leadership, we need to reflect on what we know about learning and the change process and the interconnectedness of learning and change. Michael Fullan (1991) emphasizes the importance of the leadership role with his observation that, "the leader's conceptual understanding of the dynamics of the organization, the processes of change, and the people in his/her jurisdiction represents the most generative (or degenerative if it is missing) source of ideas about what goes into a plan and what steps have to be taken when things go wrong" (p. 198).

The provincial education plan has identified school-based management as a goal to be achieved during the 1997/98 school year. In describing attempts at educational reform through the years, Sarason (1990) uses the term "first order change"; a superficial implementation of concepts or programs as opposed to significant fundamental change which is referred to as "second order." A review of the literature on the change process leads to the conclusion that this most important and most worthwhile initiative may have only a superficial impact on schools (and most importantly, what takes place in the classroom), if there is not careful consideration given to what we know about the change process. Marris (1975) describes how the impact of a change initiative is thwarted when reformers who have assimilated the change (such as school-based leadership) after a good deal of analysis and debate, deny others the chance to do the same. He describes how these reformers treat others as "puppets dangling by the threads of their own conceptions" (p. 166). Well, how do we go beyond the first order stage or how do we avoid the sense of being pulled one way or another like puppets with little control over the direction we take?

Barth (1990) re-emphasizes what we have already learned, through reflecting about what takes place in a thoughtful classroom, with his observation that real change must come from within the organization. He says, "I do not believe that a teacher, a principal or a professor can be a serious agent of change within a school operating only from someone else's prescription or vision. Implementing the ideas and ideals of others will always be a half-hearted enterprise" (p. 178).

The link between school-based decision making and the classroom:

- *begin with a clear mission that focuses on student teaching and learning*
- *pay attention to core issues which impact the classroom rather than peripheral concerns*
- *make changes in the organizational structure to give administrators, teachers and parents "real power and authority"*
- *provide time for meaningful involvement in decision making*
- *invest in high quality professional development;*
- *reward accomplishments, large and small*
- *work to establish a collaborative school culture focused on improvement.*

— Guskey and Peterson
"The Road to Classroom Change," *Educational Leadership* (1995)

We can conclude that mandating site-based management is doomed to failure, but I do not believe that this is necessarily the case. There is a place for providing leadership from outside the organization. We should not become involved in the "top down" versus "bottom up" debate because what is most important is involving everyone in the process of developing a better understanding of the proposed change and a commitment to making it work. Fullan (1991) says:

> We can reach two paramount conclusions about change. First, we are talking about changes in the culture of schools, not the implementation of particular reforms. Second, it is no longer a matter of centralization versus decentralization since it is clear that all levels are profoundly implicated — the classroom, the school, the school district and beyond (p. 204).

The challenge, then, is to bring together those involved in and impacted by the change process, in fostering a significant change in the culture of the school and the school system rather than treating site-based management as an add-on program. It is a formidable challenge for as Sarason (1971) emphasizes, cultural change is complex and difficult because it involves questioning the assumptions and regularities of schooling. Site-based decision making has the potential for facilitating this process of bringing about a significant change in the culture of the school and the school system. However, there are obstacles related to the change process which must be overcome.

2. Effective Implementation Involves an Understanding of Challenges and Obstacles that Must be Overcome

During the 1990–91 school year in conjunction with my doctoral dissertation studies *Toward an Understanding of Educational Change: a Naturalistic Inquiry*, I had an opportunity to work with a group of 15 teacher volunteers who came together to bring about changes in teaching practices through what became known as the "Learning and Teaching Group." Through this naturalistic inquiry study, three major themes emerged:

- without an understanding of an individual's frame of reference or perspective, little substantive educational change will occur
- understanding the context of the change is essential if educational change is to be expected
- little change will occur unless the individuals involved in the change understand its processes.

Problems or "challenges" to consider in enhancing teaching and learning:

- *The Power Problem — "Who is calling the shots?" Top down control must be removed in areas where school staffs are being encouraged to assume responsibility for decision-making.*
- *The Implementation Problem — Site-based management requires a new way of doing things which is not unlike the difference between a teacher-centred and a student-centred classroom.*
- *The Time Problem — Too often there is too little time for meaningful discussions and carefully thought-out decisions and there is a tendency to deal with matters that are much less complex than those relating to learning and teaching.*
- *The Cultural Constraints Problem — Many teachers do not want to become involved in decisions about budgets, policies and procedures. They believe it is not their job to make these decisions and they simply want to be left alone to their teaching responsibilities.*
- *The Motivator Problem — There is a basic assumption in site-based management that staff members will be enthusiastic about the opportunity to be more involved in decision making but in reality there is the question "What's in it for me?" Teachers will be reluctant to become involved in decision making which does not impact the classroom because they are already feeling overburdened with their teaching responsibilities (pp. 10–12).*

— Guskey & Peterson,
"The Road to Classroom Change,"
Educational Leadership
(December 1995/January 1996)

For each of the themes, both facilitating and inhibiting factors were identified. The findings of this study were intended to provide a new frame of reference for initiating educational change. Through the study, four inhibitors which related to the individual's frame of reference or "way of thinking" were identified:

- having a natural resistance to change
- having a concern for only practical applications
- having an inward focus
- having a general, negative response to a top-down approach to leadership.

Members of the learning and teaching group described a tendency to teach as one has been taught and to resist change that deviates from the traditional view of the teacher as a disseminator of information. Teacher isolation emerged as a major inhibiting factor in this study. The following teacher comment is typical: "I feel very isolated. I would like to have teachers come into my classroom to see what I am doing and I would like to visit other teachers' classrooms — but it just doesn't happen." Participants also evidenced a belief that most changes come from above. A common comment was, "I wonder what is coming down the tube next." Through this study, two contextual factors were identified as inhibitors to the change process: being overwhelmed by curriculum expectations, external examinations and accountability outcomes, and being constrained by time.

The teachers described the inhibiting effect of the concern with covering the curriculum and preparing students for the departmental examinations that prevented them from taking time to explore new strategies to teaching. A typical comment about time constraints was, "I would really like to make some changes in what I am doing but there just isn't enough time to try anything." As well, four other inhibiting processes were identified that have an inhibiting impact on change initiatives: trying to force change, trying to control behaviour, establishing hidden agendas, and trying quick-fix approaches to solving the educational problems. It became obvious through the study that change is not likely when individuals attempt to take a simplistic approach and when they fail to appreciate the complexity of the change process.

Through this study, I learned that there is a natural resistance to change. For educators, a suggested change is a challenge to one's professional competence. There is an implication that what we have been doing in the past has been incorrect or it has not been good enough. There is security in the status quo. As well, there is a tendency to feel overwhelmed with all that is taking place. Another initiative means more time away from what each individual believes to be important. There is also a reluctance to become

Those who are calling for pervasive changes in the culture of schools stress that reform is an ongoing process — "steady work" — grounded in the day-to-day experience of students rather than a series of sporadic attempts to respond to the latest educational innovation.

— Midgely & Wood,
"Beyond Site-Based
Management: Empowering
Teachers to Reform Schools,"
Phi Delta Kappan
(November 1993)

involved in philosophical adventures which do not appear to have any practical value. There isn't time to be philosophical.

A major barrier to address in presenting the site-based leadership philosophy is the inward focus which is common among teachers. Teachers feel isolated both physically and psychologically. There is a tendency to avoid discussing questions or concerns in regard to learning and teaching because teachers don't want their colleagues to think that they may have a problem. In many ways, teaching is a closed door profession.

Guskey and Peterson (1995) provide further elaboration on problems or challenges which must be considered if school-based leadership is going to enhance learning and teaching. Deal describes the debilitating effect that attempts at bringing about educational reform have had on teachers (see sidebar).

> *For many teachers and administrators the rapid pace of change has torn the heart out of schools. Heart will not be restored by knowledge; it can only be restored by dancing and healing. But this will require a significant shift in our thinking about how schools can be changed. At the very least we can stop running them by promoting change and reform that weakens the moral fibre of schools thereby dampening the promise for the future (p. 147).*
>
> — T. E. Deal,
> "Healing Our Schools:
> Restoring the Heart,"
> *Schools as Collaborative*
> *Cultures* (1990)

Site-based leadership has a tremendous potential for strengthening the moral fibre of our schools but we do need to be aware of these and other barriers that exist.

In my study, in addition to identifying barriers or inhibitors to the change process to be addressed and minimized as much as possible, I also found that there were facilitators to the process, the most important being operating on the basis of one's philosophy and beliefs. In the learning and teaching group, opportunities were provided to reflect on one's basic philosophy and beliefs about learning and teaching by addressing the question, "What do we know about how students learn and what are we doing about it?" One teacher in the study commented:

> Before you can be a positive part of change or a facilitator of change, you have to be really sure of what you believe personally. The learning and teaching group has focused a great deal on the importance of operating from the essence. It is important to understand clearly and to be guided by our values and beliefs, if we hope to operate beyond what could be described as a superficial level.

My conclusion from this study was that, if attempts at bringing about educational reform, (such as site-based management) are to be successful, a new approach based on a better understanding of the change process is needed. The process must begin at the level of the individual rather than the provincial, jurisdictional or school level. If change hinges on a paradigm shift, or change of perspective, one must begin by understanding one's personal perspective or one's frame of reference. In addition, there is a need to understand the context for change and to provide a supportive setting that minimizes inhibiting factors.

Site-Based Leadership

Fundamental to the success of site-based leadership is a high degree of empowerment. The staff's highest priority must be on serving the best interests of the students. The success of attempts to implement site-based decision making will be dependent on the ability of trustees, central office personnel, principals, staff members and school councils to adopt new roles and responsibilities. All of the participants in site-based decision making must find ways to work together in the spirit of shared responsibility.

> *What is vital in the process of empowering teachers is to make connections with the teachers' classroom life and their conception of what teaching and learning is all about.*
>
> *Teachers become leaders rather than committee members.*
>
> — Midgely and Wood,
> "Beyond Site-Based
> Management: Empowering
> Teachers to Reform Schools,"
> *Phi Delta Kappan*
> (November 1993)

1. The Teacher as Leader

Above all, we need to recognize that the teacher is the key leader. Petrie (1990) presents a new view of educational leadership in which teachers are seen as reflective practitioners, and bureaucratic rules and regulations are kept to a minimum.

Sarason (1990) describes how we need to begin reform with the key leader in the educational enterprise — the classroom teacher. He describes how teachers and, in turn, students typically feel powerless. He sees this powerlessness as something that breeds reduced interest and motivation at best, a kind of passionless conformity and at worst rejection of learning. When one has no stake in the way things are, when one's needs or opinions are provided no forum, when one sees oneself as the object of unilateral actions it takes no particular action to suggest that one would rather be elsewhere.

Midgely and Wood (1993) acknowledge that teachers may not wish to become involved in discussions about the school budget or organizational details that seem only remotely connected with teaching or with defining the purpose of school. They observe that what is vital in the process of empowering teachers is to make connections with the teachers' classroom lives and their conceptions of what teaching and learning are all about. They also prescribe a model in which teachers are leaders rather than committee members who advise the principal. They acknowledge that site-based management provides the mechanism that is needed to empower teachers and bring about significant school change provided that it is recognized as a process and not an end in itself.

> *"Structures will have to be developed that will allow a broad range of discretion and influence not merely in how to teach the syllabus once the classroom door has been closed but in the very construction of the syllabi. The leadership will be the leadership associated with groups of semi-autonomous professionals rather than the leadership associated with hired help."*
>
> — H. Petrie,
> "Reflections on the Second
> Wave of Reform," *Education
> Leadership in an age of
> Reform* (1990)

It is easy to see how some schools could adopt the apparatus of Site-Based Management and declare their teachers to be "empowered" when there is no change of any consequence for students.

— Midgely and Wood,
"Beyond Site-Based
Management: Empowering
Teachers to Reform Schools."
Phi Delta Kappan
(November 1993)

Does It Work?

School-based Decision making has not only resulted in good decision making, but also generally improved trust and opened lines of communication. In addition, because more people have access to the decision making apparatus, there is more room for new initiatives and addressing problems. A number of respondents report improvements in morale.

— NEA Survey (1996)

2. Building a Culture for Collegial Interaction

The principal's role is primarily to build a culture for collegial interaction. Barth (1990) provides elaboration: "somehow the school principal must assume more of the burden of protecting the best interests of teachers and liberating more the constructive power of which teachers are capable. A key to improving schools from within, then, lies on improving the interactions among teachers and between teachers and principals" (p. 28). Principals need to provide opportunities for teachers to have greater freedom and a more significant voice in decisions that impact their classroom. Teachers need to have opportunities for interaction and mentorship and principals need to encourage teachers to be initiators.

3. A School and School System Charter

A good school has a clear purpose which is understood and supported by the principal, staff, students, parents, school system administrators and board of education. Each school has certain goals that are common with other schools and at the same time there are some goals and priorities that are unique to the school, based on the students' needs, staff's interests and skills, and parental and community preferences. These unique values and beliefs articulated through a process of active, collaborative involvement could be outlined in the form of a school charter. Similarly, the process could be extended to the system level to develop a system charter outlining the fundamental values and beliefs that form a framework for decision making.

4. Meaningful Involvement in Decision Making

The emphasis in site-based leadership is on meaningful involvement. A principal cannot involve students, staff and school council members in all of the decisions that are made for the school. In fact, in many cases there is no desire on the part of the stakeholders to be involved in most decision-making situations. The principal is expected, through a consultative process, (think tanks, school council and staff meetings, and committees) to establish the parameters and guidelines for the operation of the school. For example, the stakeholders can work together in describing what is important in regard to learning and teaching, and in identifying the outcomes that would reflect achievement of the learning and teaching, goals and priorities.

Reynolds (1993) provides a summary of the principal's role in terms of improvement in the quality of the work environment and in the quality of the instructional program: meeting the management needs of the school will be the first priority of the staff.

Attaining a satisfactory level will allow the principal to focus on increasingly comprehensive, school-wide perspectives. Creating a positive organizational culture will facilitate site-based management providing participants with increased involvement, commitment and ownership, and leading to increased effectiveness and satisfaction. With a positive organizational culture, the principal can focus on influencing attitudes and beliefs about change by the staff, and on potential internal changes to attain school improvement. With a school-wide perspective, adopting the strategic planning model for program improvement will provide a common language and a comprehensive approach to school improvement, linking both the district and individual building efforts (p. 90).

5. School System Leadership — Creating a Commonwealth of Learning

The success of site-based leadership is dependent on everyone knowing their roles and responsibilities (Chapter 4). The superintendent, as the chief executive officer, must assume ultimate responsibility for what takes place in the school system. It is the superintendent's role to facilitate the process of site-based leadership and to ensure that it is clearly understood and that it is operating as it is intended. The superintendent and the other central office staff take on a role which is more consultative, collaborative and facilitative, as opposed to mandating and controlling. Reynolds (1993), in reflecting on the role of the superintendent and central office, notes that sometimes site-based decision making fails because it becomes too successful. He describes how site-teams "take the ball and run" devoting time and energy to a new program or altered budget allocations only to find them vetoed by the central office (p. 206).

It is clear that the district offices will have to rely more on their working relationships with schools and less on rules and mandates to steer a course through the turbulent waters. Schools have to have room, a good deal of local decision-making power and help in the problems they face. That means a well coupled relationship, not a distant one (p. 58).

— Miles and Lewis, "Mastering the Will and Shall for Change," *Educational Leadership* (1990)

The board and central office, in promoting and supporting site-decision making, must ensure that the rules of the game are clearly understood and followed. The old style of leadership which is based on control, compliance and centralized decision making, must be replaced with the new values and beliefs which are based on collaboration and meaningful involvement in the decision-making process.

Open communication is essential if people are going to come together to initiate change. Fullan (1991) acknowledges that "the district administrators more than any other individuals in the district set the pace and tone concerning the climate of communication." Bennis and Nanus (1986) refer to "the process of establishing relationships, building bridges of mutual trust and respect and providing the structure for two-way interaction. They describe the process as establishing a commonwealth of learning."

It is interesting to reflect on what is taking place in a school system through site-based decision making as creating a commonwealth of learning.

There still is a debate involving the issue of leadership in terms of "bottom up" change that will empower master teachers and put the burden on school improvement at the local level and "top down" change where there are mandated programs involving teacher evaluations, curricular expectations, external testing of student achievement and a strong emphasis on accountability. At the present time, it seems that we have both forces operating. Superintendents are trapped between the conflicting demands of these two views. They need to respond appropriately and thoughtfully to the mandate of Alberta Education, while at the same time they need to encourage teachers to show leadership and initiative in developing programs and teaching practices to improve learning and teaching. This is similar to the dilemma of the classroom teacher addressing the expectation that the teacher will be the disseminator of knowledge and will determine the nature of learning activities, as opposed to much more significant involvement of students in the decision-making process in terms of, not so much what will be learned, but more how learning can take place in a way that is most meaningful for the students.

The role of the superintendent in working with the trustees, school administrators and staff members, school council members, parents and community members is to promote what Schlechty (1990) has described as participatory leadership — conditions in which ideas in their most compelling form can flow up and down the organization like in a thoughtful classroom where the teacher and students share the leadership role.

Trustees too, have a new role through site-based leadership. It is their role to provide visionary leadership with a learning focus. In working with the superintendent they must think in terms of the bigger picture and foster the development of schools and in fact all "sites" in the school system as interconnected units rather than isolated islands.

The school system goals must be consistent with goals established by the Department of Education and broad enough to provide opportunities for schools to chart individual directions which have been identified through a collaborative planning model.

As well the board of trustees provides direction for the school system through policies, the allocation of funds and resources, and an organizational structure in keeping with the site-based leadership philosophy.

The Golden Hills Leadership Model — The Implementation of a Site-Based Decision Making Model

During the past school year, a number of action committees were formed in the Golden Hills school system to involve stakeholders in a careful consideration of issues and trends which were impacting schools. One of the committees, the Site-Based Leadership Action Committee, was involved in reflecting on "what is and what ought to be in place." The committee developed a document entitled the "Golden Hills Leadership Model." The document has provided a focal point for discussion and deliberation relating to the extent to which the site-based leadership philosophy is in place in our school system.

Golden Hills Administrator/Trustee Workshop

In the spring of 1997, administrators and trustees in the Golden Hills school system had an opportunity to share ideas and learn together through a series of three two-day workshops dealing with site-based leadership. The workshops were led by ATA Professional Development Coordinator Noreen O'Haire. This professional development experience demonstrated to the trustee and school system administrator participants the importance of providing time to talk, to share and to reflect. For example the "Who Does What?" chart created a great deal of lively discussion in regard to roles and responsibilities. No doubt, the experience will lead to some significant changes in the Golden Hills leadership model document and will facilitate the conceptualization of the site-based leadership philosophy.

The workshops reinforced the importance of developing a common language and understanding of the site-based leadership philosophy, as well as the following fundamental elements:

- begin with a clear vision that focuses on student learning and teaching, and communicate the vision to all stakeholders
- create a school system charter and school vision outlining fundamental values and beliefs in regard to learning and teaching, and make them the foundation for all decisions
- provide time to be learners through professional development activities, classroom exchanges and visits to other schools
- alter governance structures to give administrators, teachers and parents real power and authority
- decentralize authority
- empower individuals to make decisions

The board of trustees is responsible for identifying priorities and establishing goals and an education plan for the school system in a collaborative manner with the active involvement of all stakeholders.

School board policy and procedures for school-based decision making shall:

- *define the roles, responsibilities and relationships with a focus on broad distribution of power and authority for decision making among all participants: principals, teachers, instructional support staff, parents, school councils, the community central office and the Board of Trustees*

— Alberta Education Policy
1.8.2, January 1991

- provide training in regard to new roles and relationships, and the successful implementation of the site-based philosophy

Individuals are involved in decisions that impact them.

- emphasize participatory decision making where individuals are involved in decisions that impact them in their roles, and impact learning and teaching (don't ask individuals to be involved in decisions in which they have no interest or for which they have no information)
- ensure that all members of a particular site (classroom, school, division office, board, school facilities, transportation) have opportunities to be involved in the decision-making process (in varying degrees depending on their needs and skills)
- involve all stakeholders, (school and school system staff, school council, parents, community members, and students) in the process of meaningful involvement in the decision-making process

Goals must focus on teaching and learning.

- establish goals that can be achieved (just as a teacher provides success experiences for students)
- establish criteria and measures that indicate how well each site in the school system is doing in meeting its goals and enhancing learning and teaching
- maintain a results orientation
- make provision for time to talk, and quality time to participate and address fundamental questions such as, "What do we know about how students learn and what are we doing about it?"
- set goals for the decision-making process that focus on learning and teaching as the key issues — not peripheral concerns

Site-based decision making is a process — not an end in itself.

- maintain a learning focus — a focus on professional development and continuous improvement — professional development activities should be oriented towards building a school-wide capacity for change, creating a professional community and developing a shared knowledge base
- provide information to guide the decision-making process
- establish a positive, supportive culture which reinforces collaboration and facilitates the learning and teaching process
- reward accomplishments, large and small
- recognize the importance of motivation and taking time to celebrate accomplishments
- recognize that site-based leadership is a process — not an end in itself

- recognize that site-based decision making is not primarily tied to budgetary matters
- model qualities and strategies of a thoughtful classroom teacher
- be responsive to parent concerns and involve them in the school community through meaningful input in the decision-making process
- ensure active support from all levels of the organization
- work to establish a collaborative school culture focused on improvement — just like the thoughtful classroom
- clarify accountability — "who is accountable to whom and for what?"
- understand the context of change and how it varies from site to site
- adopt a system-wide perspective and be able to see the big picture rather than operating as isolated islands.

Concluding Comments

The foregoing is not an attempt to list the steps to follow in implementing site-based leadership or to provide a model for successful implementation. That, I believe, would be inappropriate, because, as I have emphasized, site-based leadership is a philosophy rather than a program. It describes a process rather than an end in itself.

If there is a model to follow, I would refer readers back to my initial comments on the thoughtful classroom. I have come to believe that we need to address the issues and challenges in education with our knowledge of learning and teaching, and what takes place in a thoughtful classroom.

These same elements apply to site-based management and all aspects of educational leadership. The real potential for site-based management lies in the promise to bring to educational organizations and educational leadership these key elements and to provide the "setting and incentives for doing, thoughtfully and humanely, the work of the mind."

The fundamental elements of a thoughtful classroom include:

- meaningful and purposeful involvement
- establishing relationships and building bridges of trust and mutual respect
- maintaining open lines of communication and the two-way sharing of ideas and information
- confidence building
- motivating, nurturing and empowering those we work with
- providing successful experiences and celebrating these successes.

Golden Hills is located east of Calgary and includes Acme, Carbon, Carseland, Drumheller, Gleichen, Hussar, Linden, Standard, Strathmore, Three Hills, Torrington, Trochu and Rockyford. There are 34 schools serving 5,982 students.

Golden Hills Leadership Model

Education in Canada is for the most part seen as a provincial responsibility. Most of the provinces, including Alberta, have shared this responsibility with locally elected school boards who have been given certain powers as set out in the *School Act*. The Alberta Legislature, through the *School Act*, has delegated much of its authority for the governance of education to locally elected school boards. School boards are agents of the legislature and, as such, have certain obligations to perform and certain powers to carry out their tasks. In keeping with the theory that government is most effective when it is placed closest to the people being governed, local people elect trustees to act for the legislature in the local community. In this sense, the trustee is the bastion of democracy, government for the people, by the people (*Alberta School Boards Association Handbook*, January 1996).

The board of trustees and administrative staff are responsible for overseeing the overall operation of the school system. The school system leadership function includes: operating on the basis of identified key values and beliefs; establishing system goals and priorities; policy development, adoption and implementation; the development and implementation of a school system budget; the allocation of teaching and support staff; the allocation of funds to school-based budgets; developing and implementing a school facilities and maintenance plan; the provision of transportation services and the evaluation of results achieved in regard to the school system education plan.

Clearly, schools must operate within the parameters as set out by both levels of government. However, there is ample latitude for the school community (teachers, parents, students and other interested rate payers) to become meaningfully involved in school-level, decision making. The Golden Hills Regional Division believes that school administrators, who are committed to working with all education stakeholders, will make decisions that are both the best possible for students being served and the most reflective of community wishes.

The following chart provides an overview of the school system and the school leadership functions.

Golden Hills System-Based Leadership	**Golden Hills School-Based Leadership**
Leadership at the school system level involves maintaining a visionary, outward proactive orientation and a learning focus throughout the school system. School system leadership promotes the work of each school in meeting student needs and fostering the development of schools in the system as interconnected units of learning and the active involvement of all stakeholders through collaborative enabling leadership.	*School-based leadership is a decision-making process in which school staff members, parents and students are collaboratively involved in the decision-making process. School-based decision making should facilitate program improvement and student learning, and allow for continuous personal and professional growth. Through school-based decision making, members of the school community have opportunities to be involved in the process of assessing needs, establishing goals, developing strategies, allocating resources and being accountable to the stakeholders.*
I. School System Charter	**I. School Charter**
School System Function/Role	**School Function/Role**
• Developing a statement of values and beliefs in the form of a school system charter	• Outlining basic values, beliefs and expectations in regard to student learning and the school's vision and mission
Processes/Mechanism	**Processes/Mechanism**
• Grassroots input of stakeholder groups through think tank sessions, focus groups and on-going feedback	• Involvement of students, staff, parents, school council and community members in developing a school charter that reflects both system goals and community needs
II. School System Education Plan	**II. School Education Plan**
School System Function/Role	**School Function/Role**
• Adoption of a school system education plan (by April for the next school year) which articulates goals and priorities for the operation of the school system in keeping with the directions that have been established by the Department of Education and based on feedback from stakeholder groups on an ongoing basis	• Completion of the school education plan (by June of each year for the next school year) based on the school system education plan, provincial directives, and the input of stakeholders
Processes/Mechanism	**Processes/Mechanism**
• Implementation of the education plan and evaluation on an ongoing basis of the degree of success that has been experienced • Active involvement of stakeholders through think-tank sessions, focus groups and action committees in the implementation of the plan, evaluating the degree of success that is being experienced and developing recommendations for education plans in the future	• Implementation and ongoing evaluation of the school education plan through the involvement of students, staff and parents utilizing school think tank sessions, focus groups and school action committees • The amount of stakeholder involvement varies from school to school • The overriding focus is learning and teaching

III. School System Policy Development	**III. School Rules and Procedures**
School System Function/Role	**School Function/Role**
• Policy development adoption and implementation	• School procedures and rules
Processes/Mechanisms	**Processes/Mechanisms**
• Policy recommendations are developed by the policy committee with the active involvement of stakeholders with the board of trustees assuming ultimate responsibility for policy adoption • The board may need to make provisions for some schools to opt out of a policy due to particular community values and norms	• Adoption of school rules/procedures (in keeping with board policy) through the involvement of community stakeholders
IV. School System Budget	**IV. School Budget**
School System Function/Role	**School Function/Role**
• Development and implementation of a school system budget (April each year for the next school year)	• Development and implementation of a school-based budget based on the allocations that are outlined in the school system budget (June each year for the next school year)
Processes/Mechanisms	**Processes/Mechanisms**
• Development and implementation of a school system budget through the active involvement of stakeholders and consideration of input from the school system administrators' association and the school system budgetary advisory committee	• Provide opportunity for input from students, staff, school council members, parents and community members in regard to budgetary priorities based on needs that have been identified in the school education plan
IV.(a) Teaching and Support Staff	
School System Function/Role	**School Function/Role**
• The allocation of teaching and support staff	• Deployment of teaching and support staff
Processes/Mechanisms	**Processes/Mechanisms**
• Use of a staffing framework and guidelines • The active involvement of school administrators and school staffs in identifying specific needs of the school community that need to be addressed in the allocation of staffing • Consideration of personnel agreements and school system action committee recommendations	• Meaningful involvement of school staff members, students, parents, school council members and consideration of school committees • Decision making in regard to the number of allocated staff members and how they will be deployed with consideration given to such factors as program organization and class size • Consideration of the possibility of using funds from the staffing allocation for other budget areas or by using funds from other areas for staffing

IV.(b) Basic Budgetary and Special Allocations (Career Technology Studies, Special Education and Fine Arts Programs)

School System Function/Role	School Function/Role
• Allocation of funds from the instructional component of the school system budget to schools	• Decisions in regard to the development of a school-based budget and the allocation of resources
Processes/Mechanisms	**Processes/Mechanisms**
• Approximately 90 per cent of the instructional component of the budget will be allocated to staffing. The remainder of the funds will be allocated to schools on a per pupil basis except in those cases where there are identified, earmarked priorities, such as educational consultants, professional development, IMC, and special projects; e.g., technology allocation • Consideration of recommendations of the administrators' association and the budgetary advisory committee	• Involvement of school staff members, school councils, students, parents and community members in considering the previous year's expenditures and components of the budget in which a deviation from the past may be warranted. • Consideration of the amount of the budget that will be allocated to the purchase of textbooks and learning resources • Establishment of priorities to be addressed through the capital fund for the purchase of office equipment, computer technology and photocopiers • Determination of the amount of funding that will be allocated to each teacher for supplies and media items • Determination of funds to be allocated for school administrative purposes

V. School System Facilities and Maintenance

School System Function/Role	School Function/Role
• Developing and implementing a school facilities and maintenance plan	• Identification of school facility and maintenance needs
Processes/Mechanisms	**Processes/Mechanisms**
• Consideration of BQRP approvals, Alberta school buildings new construction approvals, needs analysis, priorities, architectural studies, school staff requests (with parental involvement and input) • Consideration of the staffing allocation for caretaking and maintenance services	• Identification of facility needs and maintenance priorities with the active involvement of school community stakeholders

VI. Transportation

School System Function/Role	School Function/Role
• Developing and implementing a school system transportation plan	• The allocation of funding and the provision of transportation for school educational trips and school athletics
Processes/Mechanisms	**Processes/Mechanisms**
• Consideration of existing contracts, bus route requirements, capital budget requirements and school bus maintenance	• Consideration of feedback from stakeholders regarding transportation needs

VII. Evaluation & Accountability

School System Function/Role	School Function/Role
• Stakeholder input, satisfaction surveys, evaluation of the results achieved in regard to the school system education plan	• Stakeholder input, satisfaction surveys — evaluation of the results achieved in regard to the school education plan
Processes/Mechanisms	**Processes/Mechanisms**
School system annual report, system review, monitoring by Alberta Education	Principal's annual report, school evaluations

SBDM Practices in Alberta: A New Governance Model for Wolf Creek Regional Division No. 32

Lyle Lorenz, Superintendent

In September 1995, the Board of Education introduced a new governance model in Wolf Creek Regional Division No. 32 in the form of site-based decision making.

> **Site-based decision making** is defined as a form of governance in which school personnel, parents, community members, trustees and central office staff work together to provide the programs, service, support and environment that will enable all students to experience success.
>
> A "site" is defined as a service function in the school system that has specific decision-making responsibilities and the authority to direct allotted resources to support the function. Sites in Wolf Creek Regional Division include:
>
> - schools
> - board of education
> - central office
> - technology services
> - student services
> - home education services
> - student transportation services
> - operations and maintenance.

A Brief History of Site-Based Decision Making — Wolf Creek Regional Division

The Birth of a New School System

Wolf Creek Regional Division became an official entity in January 1995, comprised of the former County of Lacombe and County of Ponoka. With an enrollment of approximately 7,500 students, it was the 13th largest school system in the province.

Building a Culture for the New School System

During the month of January 1995, the superintendent's team promoted a set of leadership cultural values throughout the school system that helped set the stage for the introduction of site-based decision making.

Governance Questions in Wolf Creek:

- What form of governance will enable schools and school systems to be more responsive to parents and students who have greater choices?
- What form of governance is most likely to permit service to become a centrepiece of a school system?
- What form of governance will generate passion, commitment and a strong sense of ownership and responsibility?

Advantages of Site-Based Decision Making in Wolf Creek:

Site-based decision making, through the service covenant, helps to:

- make more efficient use of limited funds
- increase the involvement of stakeholders
- improve the quality of decisions
- increase commitment to decision implementation; i.e., ownership
- improve accountability
- improve teaching and learning.

Key Questions at Wolf Creek Cluster Meeting:

- Is it feasible to consider system-wide implementation of site-based decision making in September 1995?
- What barriers do we need to overcome in order to be ready to implement SBDM in September 1995?
- Which decisions should be made at the school level? Central office level? What decisions should be shared?
- Do we need a system definition of site-based decision making?
- What do we hope to achieve by implementing SBDM? Is improved teaching and learning an objective of SBDM?
- What are the main differences between what we are currently doing and what we will be doing under SBDM?
- Should differentiated funding be an integral part of our SBDM model?
- What impact will school councils have in our SBDM model?
- Is staff receptive to the concept of SBDM?
- To what extent will we involve other stakeholders in developing an SBDM model?
- How do you feel about the increased managerial and fiscal responsibilities associated with SBDM? Will this expanded role have an adverse effect on your role as an instructional leader?
- Will your staff be prepared to allow parents and community members to have a role in planning and decision making in your school?

The Board of Education Sets the Direction

Following a board/central office administration planning session in late January, the board passed a motion at its February 1995 meeting to implement site-based decision making in all of its schools in September 1995.

Building an SBDM Model

1. "Cluster" Meetings

In order to build a site-based decision-making model, the board used a strategic planning process that involved a series of cluster meetings throughout the school system. Each cluster meeting was attended by trustees, central office administration, principals and assistant principals.

2. A Draft Model Emerges

As a result of the cluster meetings, the following components of a draft SBDM model were developed:

- definitions of site-based decision making
- objectives of site-based decision making
- a belief system
- an advisory committee.

3. Obtaining "Buy In" from Staff and Parents

- Each site-based administrative team was given the responsibility for obtaining input, and eventual "buy in," from its teaching and support staff.
- The board met with representatives from all parent advisory councils in the school system to discuss the draft model and obtain input.

4. The SBDM Advisory Committee Goes to Work

A 12-member SBDM advisory committee, consisting of six school principals representing a cross-section of school types and sizes, the superintendent of schools, two associate superintendents, the secretary treasurer and two trustees met on several occasions to address the financial issues involved in introducing site-based decision making throughout the school system. Using a consensus approach, the committee developed a number of recommendations with regard to per-student school allocations, centralized contingency funds and centralized instructional support services. It also made recommendations with regard to the method of determining teacher and support staff costs.

5. Administrators Give Their Approval

The SBDM advisory committee presented its recommendations at a meeting of principals and assistant principals. Following considerable discussion and debate, consensus was reached on a package of recommendations to present to the board of trustees.

6. Board Approval is Obtained

At its April 1995 regular meeting, the board approved all of the recommendations as presented by the administrators' group.

7. Finishing Touches

To complete preparations for the implementation of site-based decision making on September 1, 1995, the following documents were developed:

- SBDM Administrative Handbook
- *New Beginnings: Governance in WCRD No. 32* (includes a "service contract/covenant").

These documents may be obtained from Wolf Creek Regional Division.

Components of the Service Contract/Covenant

Basic Governance Strategies

The board of education has taken a strong stance in support of partnership, decentralization, empowerment, collaboration and more visible accountability as basic governance strategies. In so doing, the board has offered choice, flexibility and autonomy in place of control and compliance.

Joint Accountability

The board of education has provided choice, flexibility and autonomy to each school site and, in turn, has exacted a commitment from schools to deliver specific outcomes; i.e., student achievement outcomes and finance outcomes. Simply stated, greater school autonomy must be accompanied by the acceptance of responsibility and accountability for student learning, and the financial health of the school. The board is also accountable to the public and the Minister of Education for the use of funds and the results achieved. Clearly there is a joint accountability throughout the school system.

The Role of the Board of Education

It is the board's prerogative to establish the requirements and boundaries of the playing field in order for the partnership to be successfully played out (policies and guidelines, education plans for jurisdictions, and school system budgets). The board also determines the organizational structure for the jurisdiction.

The Role of Central Office

Central office personnel provide the following leadership, advisory and support functions: uphold the *School Act*, Alberta Education regulations and board policies, ensure that students have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the minister, operate as a support centre or service bureau that works in partnership with schools, promote self-managed schools within a school-system perspective, and facilitate the resolution of conflict/problems involving parents, students and staff.

Service Contract/Covenant

In its site-based decision-making model, the board of education has placed considerably more power, resources and accountability in the hands of those closest to delivering direct service to students. By decentralizing decision-making authority in the areas of budget, personnel, programs and services, the board has maximized choice for those closest to the fundamental work of the organization.

Simply stated, the board and central office have formed a **partnership** with each school community to design a governance system that offers **choice** and **autonomy** in return for **commitment.** The choice is about having control over the way service is delivered to the students. The commitment is about results and accountability; i.e., choice in exchange for a commitment. In other words, Wolf Creek Regional Division has established a **service contract** or covenant that addresses the three challenges for governance identified earlier.

The Role of the School

The school must be committed to serving the requirements of the larger organization and it must be prepared to do so by accepting the boundaries of the playing field that have been determined by the board, as well as by Alberta Education. On that field, each school sets strategy and chooses how to proceed on a day-to-day basis.

Role of the School Council

The *School Council Resource Manual* states that "the school council provides a structure in which parents, principals, teachers, students and community members can talk about education in their community." The primary role of the school council is to consult with and provide advice to principals on planning, school programs, fiscal management, communications and community relations; all of this with a view to improving student learning.

Each school is expected to develop an annual school education plan (this may take the form of a three-year plan) that is aligned with the jurisdiction plan and which includes school-generated initiatives that reflect local needs and priorities. Each school is also expected to report annually to its parents and the superintendent of schools with regard to results attained.

Concluding Comments

It is important for Wolf Creek Regional Division to continue to embrace the vision of a new governance model — that is, site-based decision making — involving partnership, decentralization, empowerment, collaboration and more visible accountability. The process is not an easy one, since it involves altering traditional views about the distribution of power, resources and accountability. The alternative to success in this endeavor is not pleasant to contemplate. If we fail, the demise of public education and public schools as we know them may be imminent. However, if we all live up to our obligations and commitments in the covenant inherent in site-based decision making, we will successfully enhance teaching and learning for all students in our school system. The reward at the end of the decade, as a new century begins, will be an abundance of evidence confirming that Wolf Creek Regional Division No. 32 truly makes a difference in the lives of its students.

The Service Covenant in Site-Based Decision Making

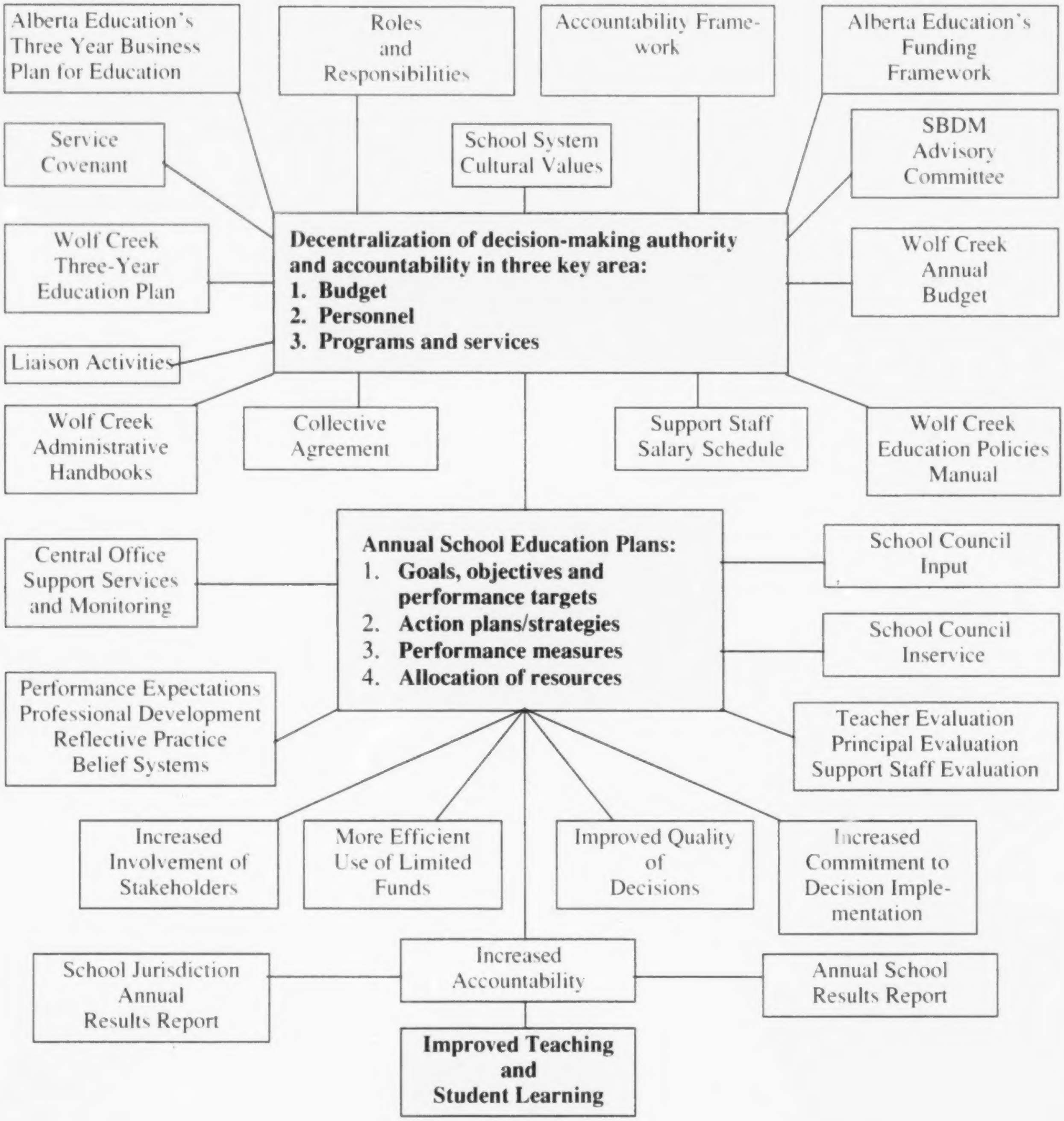
In Exchange For

CHOICE ⟷ COMMITMENT

- Budget
- Personnel Recruitment
- Programs/ Service
- Process
- School Culture
- Professional Development
- Teacher Performance Appraisal
- Teacher Enhancement
- Teacher Assistance
- Differential School-year Calendar
- Support staff performance appraisal

- Service Orientation
- Focus on Result
- More Visible Accountability
- Ownership
- Responsibility
- Education Plan
- Annual Results Report
- Shared Decision-making
- Partners with Parents and Community

Conceptual Model For Site-Based Decision Making
Wolf Creek Regional Division No. 32


Alberta Education's Three Year Business Plan for Education
Roles and Responsibilities
Accountability Framework
Alberta Education's Funding Framework
Service Covenant
School System Cultural Values
SBDM Advisory Committee
Wolf Creek Three-Year Education Plan
Decentralization of decision-making authority and accountability in three key area:
1. Budget
2. Personnel
3. Programs and services
Wolf Creek Annual Budget
Liaison Activities
Wolf Creek Administrative Handbooks
Collective Agreement
Support Staff Salary Schedule
Wolf Creek Education Policies Manual
Central Office Support Services and Monitoring
Annual School Education Plans:
1. Goals, objectives and performance targets
2. Action plans/strategies
3. Performance measures
4. Allocation of resources
School Council Input
School Council Inservice
Performance Expectations Professional Development Reflective Practice Belief Systems
Teacher Evaluation Principal Evaluation Support Staff Evaluation
Increased Involvement of Stakeholders
More Efficient Use of Limited Funds
Improved Quality of Decisions
Increased Commitment to Decision Implementation
School Jurisdiction Annual Results Report
Increased Accountability
Annual School Results Report
Improved Teaching and Student Learning

"Success For All Students"

SBDM Practices In Alberta: Palliser Regional Division No. 26

John Darroch, Associate Superintendent

What We Did in Our Jurisdiction

In forming Palliser, we decided from the beginning that regionalization was a political fact and chose to view the process as an opportunity to make two good systems better. We recognized that in an atmosphere of change it is natural for people to be unsure of the future and, if left to their own devices, they risk becoming positional and resistant.

The central office administrative team believed that SBDM could become the vehicle by which we could create a new organization with a healthy and positive team-oriented climate. From the beginning, we identified the school-based administrators as being the key to the success of our new organization. Our first inservice focused on how people react to change, what we can do to make that a positive experience rather than a negative one and some team-building activities designed to get people to begin to build relationships with others that they had not previously known. Included in this core group were other key personnel such as the transportation supervisor, supervisor of operations and maintenance, coordinators of student services and technology, secretary treasurer and the finance supervisor.

We asked all participants to consider that we were at a crossroads and had the opportunity to redesign the system from scratch, removing all the imperfections while keeping and improving those things we like the best. The group formulated a set of shared beliefs about what SBDM should look like in Palliser and identified what the implications would be for the system as well as for individuals. The central office admin. team voiced strong support for the belief that, if SBDM was going to work, the sites directly affected had to decide which responsibilities they wanted to gain and/or retain, those they wanted others to provide and which should be shared decisions. Discussions took place in small groups (five to six members) composed of a cross-section of urban/rural, large/small, secondary/elementary/support schools, etc, with consensus reached by each group and shared with the large group. Opportunity was provided for all points of view to be heard, with the constant reminder to think regionally, not just locally.

Palliser Regional Division is located east, west and north of Lethbridge and includes the communities of Arrowwood, Barons, Carmangay, Champion, Coaldale, Coalhurst, Iron Springs, Milo, Nobleford, Picture Butte, Shaughnessy, Sunnyside and Vulcan. It has 34 schools serving 4,123 students.

Factors that Assisted the Process in Palliser:

- An experienced board of trustees that viewed regionalization as an opportunity to strengthen and improve the delivery of educational services.
- A central office administration united in the belief that traditional roles and responsibilities must change.
- A board that moved quickly to establish a mission statement founded on essential values and beliefs shared by all.
- A new culture and image of Palliser Regional Division schools promoted through the creation of a prominent new logo, staff profiles, pins, bus identification, frequent communications to parents and lots of local press coverage.

The result was an SBDM model that we think has been pivotal to our success as a new organization. We made sure everyone had all the appropriate information upon which to made decisions; everyone knew how much funding was available, where it came from and any spending limitations attached to it. The critical decision was that all instructional monies went to the site from which they were generated, with pooling as determined by the total site-based administrator group. All sites are judged equal, regardless of size, and operate on the principle of one site/one vote. We used the ATA Collaborative Decision-Making Inservice Program over the 1995–96 year as a follow-up program to continue to build camaraderie and leadership skills.

Problems and Solutions

- Different schools have access to different amounts of funding. We got past the idea that each site always had to get out as much as it contributed. This was solved largely by large-site administrators recognizing and vocalizing the need to support other sites for the common good.
- The idea that we needed an SBDM manual and determining who would write it. As it turned out, we have been doing this for three years and still don't have one.
- Sparsity funding has been a problem. We have used several different funding mechanisms since our inception, and this year involved all schools and many school councils.

Benefits in the Process

- A strong sense of ownership by decision makers.
- Site administrators are much more aware of how other sites function and the problems that they face, resulting in improved communication between sites.
- Site managers are accountable for how they spend their money, resulting in more leading and less lobbying.
- Delegations to the board have all but disappeared as school councils become better educated regarding our SBDM practices and financial decisions.
- Our financial model for funding is virtually void of complicated formulas, enabling everyone to see clearly where income is derived from and how it is spent.
- We have developed a user-friendly budgeting and reporting software package that is responsive to site needs.

SBDM Practices In Alberta: Elk Island Public Schools Regional Division No. 14

Terry Gunderson, Superintendent

What We Did in Our Jurisdiction

Our first step was to set as one of our strategic goals for the 1995-96 interim education plan the goal of "managing effectively the challenges associated with government restructuring of education." A broadly based stakeholder group, consisting of teachers, administrators, parents, students, business/industry members, classified staff and trustees met as a planning committee to recommend the interim education plan to the board.

Once the goals were established, action teams involving an even broader base of stakeholders developed the strategies and action steps designed to achieve the goals. One of the strategies was to define clearly all roles, responsibilities and relationships between and among key stakeholders.

The second step was to develop a process for the redefinition of roles. A comprehensive paper was prepared by the superintendent for discussion among all stakeholders. Each stakeholder group defined its preferred role, keeping in mind the necessary interrelationships. A broadly based stakeholder group facilitated by an external consultant recommended a set of policies of roles and responsibilities to the board for approval. The concept of site-based leadership was implicit in all policies.

A second strategy under the restructuring goal was to develop and implement a comprehensive training program for all participants involved in the implementation of the site-based leadership approach/model. The third step was to develop a process for the implementation of site-based leadership of which school-based budgeting was a component. A committee of four principals and four central services personnel was formed to develop a school education plan manual which would serve as the jurisdiction's guide for implementation. The committee met regularly and stakeholders were informed and inserviced on developments. The committee recommended acceptance of the manual by the board in conjunction with the 1996–97 budget proposal for the jurisdiction.

Although committee membership is changed on an annual basis to some extent, the committee remains in place to make recommendations to the superintendent for any refinements required.

Elk Island Public Schools Regional Division is located east of Edmonton and includes the communities of Ardrossan, Sherwood Park, Fort Saskatchewan, Fultonvale, Lamont, Mundare, Uncas and Vegreville. It has 40 schools serving 14,796 students.

Factors that Assisted in the Process in Elk Island:

- Board understands its governance and advocacy role
- Central services personnel were prepared to change to a support and monitor function from a central and money-distribution function
- Principals were prepared to undertake the site-based leadership role
- Teachers, parents and the business community understood their roles
- Involvement of all stakeholders throughout the process assisted immeasurably
- Trust between and among stakeholders was of paramount importance.

Problems That Were Encountered and How They Were Solved

Some resource allocation discussions became difficult. The superintendent was prepared to make hard decisions based on the best information available. The board was prepared to accept the superintendent's recommendations after legitimate questioning.

After final discussions with the superintendent, all stakeholders were prepared to move on.

Benefits in the Process

The main benefit of the process is an informed and committed group of stakeholders. The board of trustees understands its governance role well. The superintendent, staff and school councils understand and have ownership for the eventual outcomes.

If We Did it Again, What Would We Do Differently?

There is not much we would do differently. Additional training for school-based personnel at the outset, and again as staff and school councils turn over, may have been helpful (however, resources, human and material, were tight).

SBDM Practices In Alberta: Parkland School Division No. 70

Dave Young, Superintendent

Breaking Away from a County Model

Recognizing that schools would need greater autonomy if they were to effectively operate under SBDM, the province required those schools operating under a municipal board (most often referred to as a County model) to form their own entity. This change led the former County of Parkland to break into Parkland County and Parkland School Division No. 70 in January 1995. Parkland is located southwest of Edmonton, and has 24 schools serving 9,532 students.

Aligning the Division to Meet the Demands of SBDM

As it moved from a county to a divisional model, Parkland School Division's ministerially appointed five-member board of trustees aligned the jurisdiction to meet the demands it would face as a decentralized organization. A new superintendent of schools and secretary treasurer were hired. Two associate superintendents were appointed to head up the division's new organizational and instructional support departments. As well, 28 sites where activities (and ultimately decisions) concerning the instructional programs and services to students, were designated and their responsibilities defined.

Definition of SBDM

"Site-based decision making is a process for devolving responsibility by empowering those persons closest to students to make decisions about the instructional programs and services for those students."

Basic Operating Parameters

- The primary focus will be on the learner and the learning process to promote a higher degree of responsiveness.
- Meaningful improvement will require that policies, programs and practices be focused on the unique needs and characteristics of the students in each school.
- Participation in the decision-making process must be expanded to include site managers, administrators, employees (certificated/support), school councils, other parents and students.

Sites and Their Organizational Responsibility

21 Schools & School Councils
Work together to identify a school's educational goals within the context of board policy and provincial legislation, and meet the instructional needs of their students.

Student Transportation
Ensure the safe, effective and efficient operation of transit systems, through effective route planning and evaluative processes.

Facility Operations/Maintenance
Maintain all existing infrastructures within the schools and construct new facilities and modernizations based on direction from each school.

Instructional Support Services
Provide support to schools in meeting their goals in all curricula areas, including technology integration and special needs. Also work with schools to monitor the success of programs.

Organizational Support
Ensure competent, caring staff are hired to assist Parkland in reaching its goals and monitor division outcomes.

Business and Finance
Provide an advisory role to schools and other sites regarding how to manage their budgets more effectively.

Office of Superintendent
Carry out plans established by the board of trustees, and provide support to schools to help ensure their individual goals can be achieved.

Board of Trustees
Set policy (directions) for the division and ensure plans are carried out through monitoring and evaluation.

- Decision making will be guided by the development of locally based (site) goals and objectives.
- A process to ensure school sites meet their intended goals must be summarized in an annual education plan, including:
  - profile/context — brief description of the school community it serves and issues, trends and opportunities that need to be taken into account when developing goals, results and measures for the plan
  - goals — statements which establish direction over the long term and which address the needs and circumstances of the individual communities
  - results — measurable, specific outcomes of achieving the goals
  - performance measures — tools or indicators which help to evaluate a site's success
  - strategies — actions to be undertaken to achieve desired results and subsequently goals
  - budget — budget summary.
- The bulk of the money allotted to the school jurisdiction is to be redistributed to school sites based on equitable funding.
- Monies received by school sites should be deployed according to the resources needed to achieve the desired goals outlined in their annual education plans.
- Accountability for local decisions will be monitored on an annual basis through the reporting of progress.

Funding Distribution Model

Parkland's SBDM committee decided to award instructional monies the jurisdiction receives from the province to each of its 21 school sites on an equitable basis. The foundation of the framework was built to address the disproportionate makeup of student populations among schools to create equity. In simplified terms, this means that funding is to be awarded to school sites based on the makeup of the student population rather than the programs or services they offered.

Under Parkland's funding framework, school sites receive basic, predefined amounts for each student enrolled in kindergarten, elementary-junior high and home schooling. Basic, predefined amounts are also given to high schools for each credit earned by one of their students.

Responsibility Under SBDM in Parkland

Site Manager
Make decisions regarding the site's overall goals, objectives, results, measurements and budget through extensive consultation and interaction with the school community.

Administrators/Employees
Assist in the development of site goals, objectives, results and budget. In addition, help identify and implement appropriate measurements and strategies to achieve the site's goals.

School Councils
Advise of the development of the site's goals, objectives, results and budget. In addition, advise on educational matters at the school level and provide support for local initiatives.

Central Administration
Articulate a sense of purpose, direction and teamwork for the division. As well, provide advisory support services and monitor anticipated progress and achievements.

Board of Trustees
Provide overall direction by establishing policy and divisional goals.

Funding categories in addition to the basic predefined amount have been developed for schools with a population under 300 and for students enrolled in career and technology studies, outreach, integrated occupational program and French immersion. As well, supplementary funding is available for students with special needs, ranging from mild mental disabilities to severe physical disabilities.

Using this framework, the jurisdiction allocates monies received from the province to its school sites. School sites are then responsible for deciding how they should spend their pool of money based on their annual education plans.

SBDM in Action

In pursuing their goals each year, sites follow a deliberate and scheduled process of devolved decision making, most commonly known as the annual planning cycle. Beginning in September, site managers, in cooperation with their school communities, review the results, progress and accomplishments made the previous year. Gathering data from measurements such as provincial achievement tests or a satisfaction survey, sites carefully analyze and record their areas of strength and areas of future improvement.

By the end of January, sites begin refining their annual education plans by identifying the resources available to them. These include human resources; e.g., instructional staff, support staff; material resources; e.g., textbooks; equipment resources; e.g., computers; facility resources; e.g., libraries; and financial resources; e.g., budget, locally raised funds or conditional funding such as grants.

Given that maximizing resources is an important key behind any successful institution, sites often review a variety of strategies before committing resources to any one strategy. For example, a site may decide that, rather than spending a particular amount of money on textbooks, the money would be better spent somewhere else, such as on a new program. To achieve the savings needed, the site may come up with a plan to approach textbook writers to obtain specific chapters of the text on disc.

By March of each year, site managers present a proposed annual education plan to the superintendent. On behalf of the board of trustees, the superintendent critiques the educational components of the plan while the secretary treasurer reviews the budget. With the approval of the division's budget in May, each plan is returned to the appropriate site with or without requested revisions for implementation in the fall.

The Real Benefits

Site-based decision making is a methodical process for continuous improvement. Because they are active participants in decision-making matters, site manager employees, school councils and students are able to share a greater sense of ownership for the decisions being made. In turn, they feel more accountable for the ultimate success of their schools and are encouraged to continually strive for improvements to better ensure their students' needs are being met.

SBDM Practices In Alberta: Calgary RCSS District No. 1

Jeremy Simms, Superintendent

Calgary Catholic School District has 83 schools serving 30,016 students.

Joe Murphy, who coauthored the book *School-Based Management as School Reform*, states that school-based decision making can only be effective and efficient in improving student achievement if it is done within the context of sound principles based on values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

What We Did in Our Jurisdiction

In August 1992, the Calgary Catholic School District initiated strategic plans toward becoming a learning organization. A major reorganization of administration with alignment to a core purpose was designed and implemented. The administrative structure was significantly flattened and steps were taken to move closest to the place where the decisions would be implemented. In creating a learning organization with a more flattened organizational structure, alignment to a core purpose is absolutely essential.

Principles of Decision Making

Schools within the jurisdiction have worked toward developing their own core purpose, leverage points and action plans. The 1992 move toward decentralization in Calgary Catholic was done within the context of the pillars of the learning organization: catholicity, instructional focus, accountability, fiscal responsibility, and the dignity and worth of individuals.

A review of the literature on the implementation of site-based management, which was shared with all our publics, indicated that there is no empirical evidence that student achievement is enhanced or that there are significant monetary savings.

In our Catholic learning organization, improving student achievement is central to our core purpose. Decentralization, with alignment to our pillars, can be both effective and efficient. The ambiguity inherent in the lack of a precise and/or shared definition of site-based management emphasizes the necessity for a shared commitment to the pillars of our learning organization. All changes in both policy and practice in decision making for our district must also be done within the context of the law.

Chronology of Information Sharing and Feedback Sessions

Calgary Catholic is now well advanced on its continuum of decentralization. The district currently uses a "sandwich approach" (top down combined with bottom up) decision-making model. An example of this sandwich approach is our staffing process. The human resources department handles all initial recruiting and subsequent contractual procedures [top down]. Principals interview and select all personnel who are eligible and have applied for positions in their school [bottom up]. However, administration centrally places staff who are declared surplus to their current school positions [top down].

Glickman (1993), a major researcher in restructuring school systems, also supports the top down/bottom up approach to school-based decision making. He states:

> . . . the district's role is to coordinate and implement active assistance to schools . . . the job of both school board and district is to define the district's core beliefs about teaching and learning; define the goals and objectives (outcomes of an educated school student); provide the money, technical services and human consultation to allow schools to figure out how to get the job done; and to determine whether progress is being achieved. (p. 112)

Seminars

The Calgary Catholic school district sought input from district stakeholders on school-based decision making as early as January 1995. In January, a leadership seminar was held for professional and support staff. Another seminar for Catholic school supporters was held later in January. The Alberta Education document on proposed roles and responsibilities for school councils was carefully examined. Participants gave feedback on the roles of school councils as well as current decision-making processes and centralized services. The feedback from these two seminars was shared with stakeholders.

. . . combined strategies that capitalize on the centre's strengths (to provide perspective, direction, incentives, networking and retrospective monitoring) and locals' capacities (to learn, create, respond and contribute) are more likely to achieve greater overall coherence. Such systems also have greater accountability given the need to obtain political support for ideas to build into patterns of interaction.

Simultaneous top down/bottom up strategies are essential because dynamically complex societies are full of surprises. . . . The more that top down and bottom up forces are coordinated, the more likely that complex systems will move towards greater effectiveness.

— Michael Fullan,
The Governance of Curriculum,
ASCD Yearbook, 1994

Principal's Fall Seminar

The principals' councils played a major role to both plan and execute the program for the principals' fall seminar held in November 1995. Joe Murphy was the keynote presenter. In decentralized decision making, the power and authority moves not only down to the principal, but also out to the school community, to include teachers, school councils and support staff.

Catholic School Supporters' Seminar

Trustees, parents, parish representatives and students participated in this seminar to review the new responsibilities for school councils, principals and staff. School-based decision making within the context of the pillars of our Catholic learning organization was discussed. Participants provided feedback on general questions regarding school-based decision making and centralized support services.

Leadership Seminar for Professionals and Support Staff

A leadership seminar was held in November 1995. Principals, supervisors, teachers, one member from the executives of ATA, CUPE and CCBESSA, and representatives from the district's exempt staff participated in this seminar. W. Dever gave a general overview. The pillars of the learning organization were emphasized as the touchstones for all decision-making processes in our district. The concept of moving decision making from central office down to the principal and out to the school community was reviewed.

A meeting with principals in our school district was held in December 1995. Forms specifically outlining a continuum of decision-making responsibilities for the program and human resources areas were distributed to the principals. In the context of the district pillars and the upcoming budget deliberations, principals were asked to respond, using these forms to indicate which functions should become more school-based and which should remain centralized at the district level.

Principals were asked to present the information to their staff and school council. The school community has the opportunity to provide their feedback using the designated forms.

SBDM Practices In Alberta: Lethbridge School District No. 51

Winston Churchill High School

Carol Steen, Principal, and
Gary Kiernan, Superintendent

What We Did in Our Jurisdiction

In Lethbridge School District, the SBDM process began in 1994 when the public school board authorized a pilot project in three district schools. A committee was struck, consisting of representatives from: the board (two trustees), central office (superintendent, deputy superintendent, associate superintendent of business affairs), three schools (elementary, junior high and senior high levels) with principal, clerical staff, parents, teachers and union presidents. The committee met over a period of 18 months and produced a handbook. The handbook is designed to provide a framework and direction to schools in the district as they move toward SBDM.

At Winston Churchill High School, we put a model in place to make decisions in our school. This site-based model assists us in involving all stakeholders in the process. If we were starting this now, we would involve more students in the process.

Shared Learnings

For about a year and a half, the toward a system of schools (TSS) committee has been involved in the study and practice of site-based decision making/site-based management (SBM). As lead schools, we have experienced some ups and downs in this journey . What we have learned includes:

- There is much information, sometimes with conflicting views, on SBM. We have already filled a four-inch binder.
- SBM is evolutionary — it is an ongoing process rather than an end product. The process will evolve for each site at a different rate and in a different manner, but the evolution is continual. The evolutionary process creates opportunities for schools to respond to unique needs and environments. There is no one recipe that fits all schools.
- Our school district was quite advanced along the SBM continuum before we started the pilot project, with some schools further along the continuum than others.

Lethbridge School District has 21 schools serving 8,087 students.

Support for decentralization:

- No "one best way" to teach or to organize a school or school system
- The right to choose is highly valued in our society
- Staff are better trained and more professional than ever before
- Commitment is greatly enhanced by involvement

We need to make some major adjustments in education if we are to successfully meet the challenges of our new environment.

Benefits of the Process at Winston Churchill:

- All stakeholders have input
- More ownership
- More people watching "how will this benefit our students?"

Steps in Implementing SBDM: Lethbridge School District

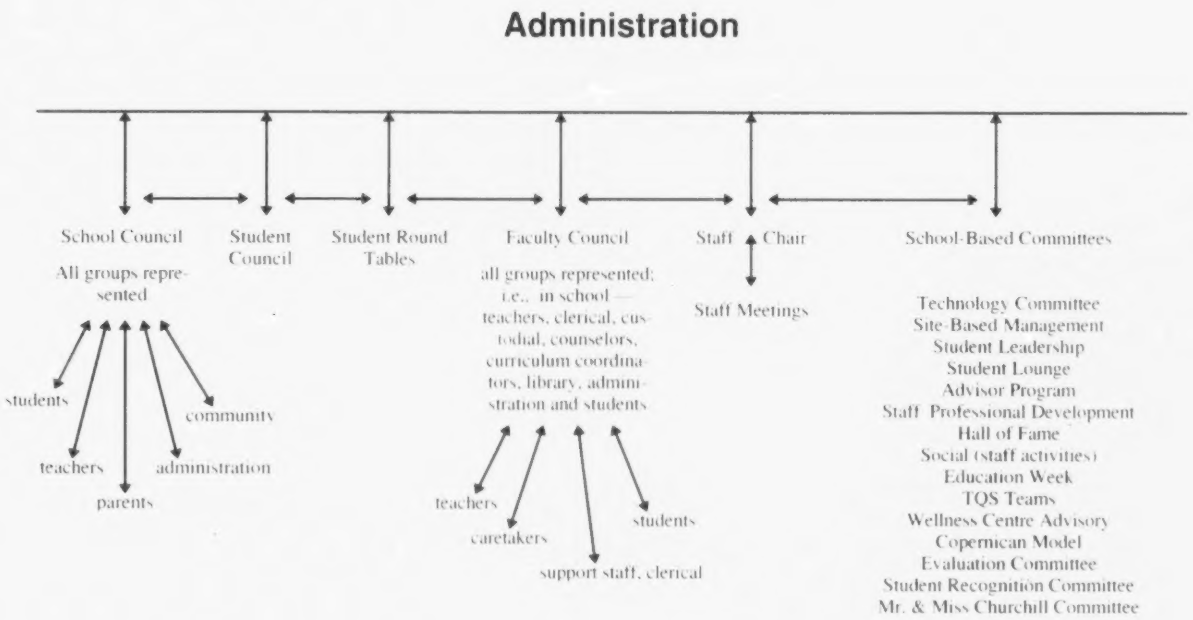
- Clarify the purpose
- Develop the model
- Allocate the funds
- Provide the training
- Funding the plan
- Go for it!

- SBM requires a high degree of cooperation between administrative levels and among sites to best meet the needs of Lethbridge School District students; where cooperation exists, sharing occurs and students benefit.
- Individual schools must "take care of their own" while maintaining a district focus. We are still a system of schools.
- SBM makes each school more accountable for resources and educational outcomes of decisions. It is our goal, through SBM, to make decisions that are in the best interests of our students in curriculum, instruction, staff development and resources and to ensure that changes made affect teaching and learning.
- If a decision or process connected with SBM does not directly or indirectly enhance the learning and instruction of students, or does not enhance staff development, we should ask "why are we doing this?"
- SBM gives schools responsibility; i.e., the ability to respond directly to stakeholder needs, with decisions being made at the school level.
- Communication and sharing of information are imperative to the effectiveness of SBM and can be difficult. There needs to be constant effort by everyone to be informed and to communicate on an ongoing basis. Good decisions are more likely to be made when all participants are well informed.
- SBM sometimes gets blamed for negative things that are not the result of SBM, but rather the result of reduced funding and downsizing; i.e., staff reductions. We must remember that SBM is merely a framework in which, with all stakeholder involvement, the needs of schools can be met.
- There are growing pains about who makes what decisions in SBM; e.g., we still haven't decided who we will allow to sell items in the staff room, yet we are capable of dispensing over a million dollars on instruction.
- In order to handle the additional workload associated with downsizing central office and implementing SBM, schools should consider having a business clerk.
- Each school has unique concerns and needs associated with maintaining staffs and programs.
- All areas should not be decentralized. We still need some central control, as the responsibilities and costs would be tremendous if everything were handled by individual schools; e.g., purchasing, building maintenance, transportation, collective agreements, etc.

- SBM takes time for all stakeholders to understand the issue, to discuss it fully, to hear each other's views and to reach consensus.
- SBM is more effective if it is built on trust; this requires that team building occur among the participants.
- There has to be the empowerment of committees to make decisions and knowledge that the committees are trusted to make decisions that will be respected. With decision making shared by many, the opportunity for involvement and ownership of decisions by all participants occurs.
- The district and the school sites need patience during the first few years of SBM because we must first learn to crawl before we learn to walk and run. Hopefully, in time, we will learn to fly as we evolve with SBM.

Winston Churchill High School

Decision-Making Model of Site-Based Management



SBDM Practices in Alberta: The Establishment of Site-Based Management in the Grasslands Regional Division No. 6

Duncan Gillespie, Superintendent, and
Clayton Allen, Consultant

A Partnership Process

In the spring of 1994, Alberta Education released its Three-Year Education Plan. This plan contained several new initiatives, one of which was to move Alberta's schools to increased local input, autonomy and accountability through site-based decision making.

In January 1995, the interim school board and the school-based administrators of the newly regionalized Grasslands Regional Division No. 6 held two workshops to study the SBM goals and the literature on this topic accumulated from studies in the United States, Great Britain and New Zealand. At the conclusion of these workshops, it was generally agreed that this approach to goal setting, policy making, budgeting and evaluating outcomes inherent in the best SBM models was an approach that would lead to better schools, and hence, better education for Grasslands' students.

In keeping with these conclusions, in March 1995, the Grasslands Regional Division Board of Education passed a motion to establish a site-based management committee. Appointed to the committee were two trustees, the superintendent of schools, the secretary-treasurer, two teachers, three representatives from the various school councils, two students and one support staff representative.

Once the site-based management committee was established, the Grasslands Regional Division applied for, and received a grant, from The Alberta Teachers' Association. The object of this grant was to ensure adequate involvement of stakeholders in the development of a system-wide SBM model. This was an assurance that the Grasslands Regional Division was most willing to provide. A representative of The Alberta Teachers' Association would sit as a member of the site-based management committee.

Grasslands Regional Division includes the communities of Brooks, Bassano, Duchess, Gem, Rosemary and Tilley. It has 19 schools serving 3,867 students.

Fundamental Beliefs in Grasslands:

- that those most affected by decisions ought to play a significant role in the making of those decisions
- that educational reform efforts will be most effective and long lasting when carried out by people who feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the process.

Purpose of the Grasslands Site-Based Committee:

To develop a plan for the implementation of site-based decision making and school management that will focus on improved student learning in the Grasslands Regional Division No. 6.

Definition of SBM in Grasslands:

A process of governing, that where appropriate, decentralizes decision making to the basic school unit by moving the process of creating solutions for improved student learning from the board room and the division office to the local school community (principal, teachers, support staff, students, parents and other interested citizens).

It is an attempt to ensure that those people affected by a decision and/or those people who are responsible for the implementation of a decision are actively and legitimately involved in making that decision.

While this grant did not pay all of the expenses incurred by the site-based management committee, it did help to pay the teacher substitute costs and the travel expenses of the committee members. The grant also assisted in providing inservice for the committee, and the remainder will help in offsetting the cost that will be involved in the evaluation of the project and the writing of the final report.

The site-based management committee held its first meeting in March 1995.

Over the course of the next six months, six more meetings were held. In this short period of time, a number of significant outcomes were achieved. The first was the development of a Grasslands definition of SBM.

The SBM Committee also developed:

- a listing of belief statements that would provide guidance for decision makers in the jurisdiction
- role descriptions for those same decision makers
- decision-making models
- a set of operating guidelines for SBM
- proposed funding formula
- sample budgeting, planning and reporting forms and documents.

In addition to this, the committee provided valuable communication services by obtaining input from the stakeholders and provided feedback based on that input to the committee on each step in the process. The committee was also able to plan and assist in the implementation of presentations and feedback meetings that were held in each community in the division, with respect to the SBM model and the funding formula being proposed.

The SBM Committee also identified areas of inservice that would ensure a smoother transition to SBM within the jurisdiction. Members of the committee arranged these workshops for employees, trustees and school council representatives on several topics related to school-based planning and decision making.

It was the work of this committee that led to the publication of the Grasslands Regional Division No. 6 manual entitled, *Guidelines For Site-Based Management.*

It should be noted that both this manual, as well as the implementation of SBM in Grasslands, are ongoing and evolving.

Workshop Idea #2: Implementing School-Based Decision Making

Purpose: to plan for implementation of SBM
to act as a progress check during implementation
to check perceptions of various stakeholders during the process.

Materials: handouts, checklists, action planning sheet, chart paper

Time: 2 hours

Participants are divided into small groups. If the group involves a variety of stakeholders, the small groups should reflect the mix. It is advisable that all partners are included in the development of the process.

Opener: Transition activity

Participants complete Worksheet #1, page 45.

- Discuss the relative positions of the x, y and z. What are the reasons for the positions?
- Discuss the nature of the changes that have taken place at the school or jurisdiction.
- Spend considerable time discussing the answer to planning and problem solving, found on the next page. How can the information be used later in the process?

This information will help the facilitator understand how far along the continuum of SBDM the participant and the site are.

Individuals complete the checklist

Complete Worksheets #2, page 47. Do all the items (action and belief statements). It is important that participants complete the activity individually. This can identify differences in understanding and involvement among the various partners.

Note: – Jurisdictions and schools that have implemented SBDM several years ago, may use the checklist in worksheet #2 (p. 47) and the planning sheets in workshops 3, 4 and 5 (pp. 50–54) as a check on their process and progress, at any time.

70

Compare in small groups

Compare the individual responses to the items. Select the items that the group agrees are "no." Develop a list for presentation to the whole group. This is the first step in further implementation.

Presentation or charting of the "no" responses.

Select the "no" items that are common for the whole group. Discuss the range of the common responses. The items will likely cluster in related areas. For example, numbers 13, 19, 20, 21 and 22 may all be identified as "no." The group must then determine a way to clarify the roles and the level of decision making. Specific strategies to do this are included in chapters 4 and 7. The "no's" identify the actions that are required to further the implementation.

Planning and problem solving

Either individually or as a whole group, select a critical item from Worksheet #2, page 47 (or in each small group, select different items) and brainstorm ways to ensure the implementation of the specific factor. These can be organized using Worksheet #5, page 54.

Worksheets #3 & #4, pages 50–52 are other ways of organizing the steps in the process.

Follow-up

A small task group may be organized to synthesize the work of these small groups and outline the steps that must be taken to change the "no" to a "yes."

An implementation plan should be drawn up based on the input and particular individuals or teams be given responsibility for undertaking the activities.

At other team meetings or PD activities, the whole group can work through the steps that are identified and discuss progress.

Workshop #2 — Worksheet #1
Transition Toward SBDM

Beginning? ——————→ **The End!**

1. Make an X where the jurisdiction is
   Y where you are
   Z where the school staff is

2. What factors/criteria did you use to make your decision about the progress?

3. What has changed? Why has it changed?

4. What have been the positive forces? The obstacles?

5. Describe what it would be like if you reached the end of the continuum for X, Y and Z.

Workshop #2 — Worksheet #2
Checklist for Implementing School-Based Decision Making

ACTION ITEMS		YES	NO
1.	Can you define the term and understand the concept?		
2.	Have you started a collection of books and information articles?		
3.	Do you really believe that SBDM will make a positive difference?		
4.	Do you know and understand the government directives, *School Act* and regulations?		
5.	Was the concept introduced to the staff (jurisdiction) in a collaborative manner?		
6.	Are time and resources (inservice) provided for the introduction and understanding of SBDM?		
7.	Is the initiative supported by the board and central office?		
8.	Are the school staffs, school councils and board committed to the process and involved in developing the SBDM process?		
9.	Is there a collaborative team in the jurisdiction working on the process of SBDM?		
10.	Is there a clear statement of purpose and vision which is shared by everyone?		
11.	Has the jurisdiction arrived at a definition for the term SBDM?		
12.	Have the central decision-makers reached an agreement with the building decision-makers on the policies, procedures and methodologies to implement the process of school-based decision making? Has this been communicated?		
13.	Have the parameters for the SBDM process been established in a collaborative way?		
14.	Is there a process in place to grant exemption or waivers to policy or rules?		
15.	Are time and money budgeted for ongoing staff development programs for those involved in SBDM?		
16.	Have local (school) decision makers been given maximum decision-making power and flexibility related to staffing and budgeting?		
17.	Have the central decision makers reached agreement with the building decision makers on a budget allocation formula?		

18. Have the school decision makers clearly defined in operational terms what they mean by SBDM?		
19. Were the roles and responsibilities for all partners clearly defined in a collaborative process?		
20. Are the new roles clearly communicated to everyone?		
21. Is it clear on a continuum of possible decision-making possibilities which decisions are totally school-based, which are totally district-based and which are shared?		
22. Is it clear at the school staff level which decisions are made by the administration, which are done by consultation, which by collaboration and which by consensus?		
23. Have appropriate school-based teams and collaborative decision-making structures been organized in the schools?		
24. Are the schools organized for increased shared decision making by staff? By parents? By the community?		
25. Is there additional time and workload for the principal and the staff?		
26. Have you conducted an audit of existing structures and processes as a basis for developing SBDM?		
27. Have students been involved in and prepared for the process?		
28. Do the schools have a vision and an improvement plan that would drive SBDM goals and processes (including budget)?		
29. Does the school plan determine/influence the budget?		
30. Are the roles of the school councils clear?		
31. Is there an ongoing process to determine if SBDM is working well or needs modification?		
32. Have you decided on methods for evaluating and reporting the success of school-based decision making?		

BELIEF ITEMS		YES	NO
1.	Do you have realistic expectations of what school-based decision making can do; do you realize that it is not a cure-all for everything happening in schools?		
2.	Do you believe that this is not a quick fix and that it will take considerable time and effort to implement and improve the process that you initially use?		
3.	Do you believe that in the long run not only will the decision-making process change but there will be a dramatic change in the culture of the organization?		
4.	Do you believe that the process of school-based decision making will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of your school and school district?		
5.	Do you believe that school-based decision making will improve communication, trust and collaboration between the building and district levels?		
6.	Do you believe that school-based decision making will create a greater feeling of ownership and greater support from the employees and the community at large?		
7.	Do you honestly like and respect people, and are you willing to depend on them to help you make important decisions?		
8.	Do you believe that dispersed leadership is the best type of leadership? Do you believe that school-based decision making nurtures and stimulates new leadership at all levels of the organization?		
9.	Do you believe that school buildings and districts are open systems and that school-based decision making is a process that improves the school's ability to become more open?		
10.	Do you believe that school-based decision making can promote continuous school improvement?		

Workshop #2 — Worksheet #3
Steps For Implementing School-Based Decision Making

At Jurisdiction Level:

1. Build understanding and support/commitment at all levels. Have a vision/mission statement that embodies SBDM.

2. Establish a district SBDM committee with representatives from all stakeholders.

3. Establish a common/shared definition of the initiative (all partners). Necessary for SBDM.

4. Clarify roles and responsibilities for all players.

5. Establish the parameters for SBDM (all partners).

6. Determine the general implementation guidelines for the jurisdiction (all partners).

7. Refocus district goals to focus on improving instruction and learning (through shared decision making) and build programs based on these goals.

8. Decide on the areas of decision making that will be centrally controlled and those that will be school controlled.

9. Develop a budget formula and a budget to carry out the goals/programs.

10. Ensure resources (time and money) for the process.

11. Develop policy that reflects an SBDM model.

12. Develop and implement an ongoing process to evaluate the SBDM program goals and processes.

Workshop #2 — Worksheet #4

Steps For Implementing School-Based Decision Making

At School Level:

1. Introduce the concept — provide information/work on definitions and guidelines. Build understanding and commitment within the staff.

2. Select a site team to guide the SBDM process. Review all team structures and responsibilities. Clarify roles.

3. Provide inservice for team members and whole staff based on the skills necessary for SBDM.

4. Review vision/mission for the school in the light of SBDM.

5. Practise team building.

6. Make decisions about who makes what decisions and how at the school level. Clearly outline the decision-making model in use.

7. Set goals that seek to improve instruction and student learning. Clarify roles.

8. Make budget decisions to reflect plan and goals.

9. Decide on areas for improvement (based on goals) . . . the Nike slogan "Just do it!"
   - Select appropriate work teams (new or existing)
   - Establish parameters for the work
   - Provide resources
   - Begin work
   - Implement the program
   - Review the process

10. Clarify the roles of the school council and other parent involvement in decision-making.

11. Design and implement an evaluation process to measure the success of school-based decisions and to continue planning. Clearly outline the decision-making model in use.

Workshop #2 — Worksheet #5
Planning — Implementation of SBDM

Items from the Checklist	Actions/ Activities	Most Responsible	When	Done

Chapter 3

Factors in a Collaborative Model

School-Based Decision Making Resource Guide:
Focus on Teaching and Learning

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Factors in a Collaborative Model

Focus Article

Tested in Alberta

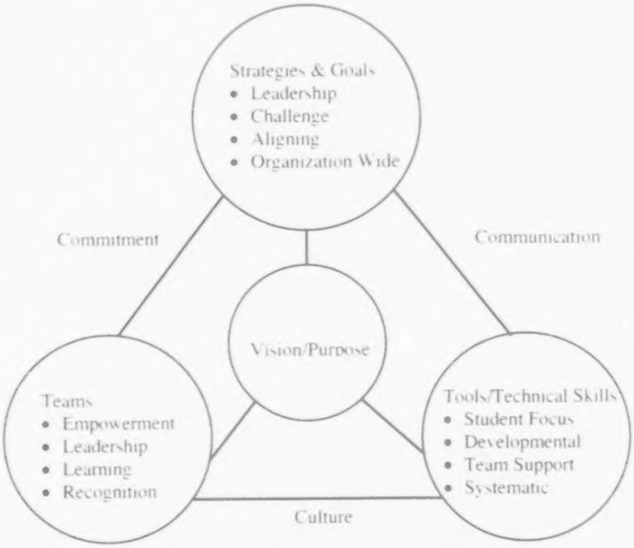
Workshop Idea

Chapter Three

Introduction

This chapter shows the relationships between interconnected factors in the complex process of a collaborative decision-making model. These factors are conceptualized in the diagram below. It illustrates the centrality of vision in developing and implementing a collaborative approach to school-based decision making.

McKinnon's article in Chapter One describes a vision for education that focuses on the primary goal of teaching and learning as explained in the principles of the thoughtful classroom. This chapter starts with a description of how vision and mission statements are developed in a collaborative way and offers some examples of mission and vision statements from Alberta school jurisdictions.



Factors for Collaboration

Mission:

- *a clear concise statement of the . . . purpose, focusing on students*
- *gives focus to everything . . . for students and the programs and services offered to them.*

Vision:

- *a description of the fundamental characteristics of education that the school board is committed to achieving*
- *describes where the school board wants to be, what its students will have achieved, and what its services and programs for students will look like.*

— Alberta Education's *Guide for Developing School Board Education Three-Year Plans and Annual Education Results Reports* (February 1996)

This chapter next examines goal setting and planning including the importance of team building. Goal setting for jurisdiction/school improvement is an important component of school board three-year education plans. The examples of how jurisdiction and school goals are developed demonstrate school-based decision making in action.

The effective use of teams and committees is an important strategy for achieving these vision-based goals. Team building is a critical skill for all participants in the process of school-based decision making. Some of the many models for organizing teams and committees are included in the chapter.

The connectors in the model — communication, culture and commitment — are important considerations in a successful SBDM model. They are included in the discussion in many of the other chapters (please note their importance in Gordon McIntosh's article in Chapter Five) and therefore are not covered in detail in this chapter.

Workshop ideas in this chapter focus on establishing a vision statement, team building, goal setting and action planning.

Focus on Mission and Vision

There is a great variety of opinion about what mission and vision statements are, what they do, or in what order to pursue their development. Some writers use the terms interchangeably. A mission statement articulates the reason an organization exists and a vision statement is a powerful statement about the future the organization hopes to achieve.

School jurisdictions, schools and school councils should have mission and vision statements which focus on learning and teaching. The statements at the three levels should be congruent but not merely copied from the other levels. The appropriate members at each level should be involved in developing the statements that reflect their current situation, needs and goals. The *School Council Resource Manual* (Alberta Education) details the process that can be used to develop a mission and vision. Chapters Four, Five, Seven and Eight describe the connections among vision, planning, budgets and roles.

> *Expanding the vision within the school house is an enterprise that will create schools with room enough for all of us to live and work and have our children learn. When we create schools that we value for our children and ourselves we will have created schools of value to others as well.*
>
> — Roland Barth, "A Personal Vision of a Good School," *Phi Delta Kappan* (March 1990)

Vision for Education: A Foundation for Our Children's Future

All Alberta students will have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of society. The education system should:

- Meet the needs of students in a rapidly changing world
- Ensure quality programs and high standards for all students
- Ensure students come first
- Help students be the best they can be
- Involve all Albertans in education
- Focus resources on students
- Teachers have a vital role
- Provide opportunities for choice
- Ensure excellence and affordability
- Account to Albertans.

A complete description of Alberta Education's vision, mission and mandate for education in Alberta is found in *Meeting the Challenge IV, Detailed Three-Year Plan for Education in Alberta*, 1997/98–1999/2000, pages 3–5.

> *Vision without action is but a dream. Action without vision is a waste of time. Vision with action can change the world*
>
> — Joel Barker, *Power of Vision* Video (1993)

Edmonton Catholic Schools

To provide an authentic education that prepares students to live more fully and in service to the reign of God.

Grande Yellowhead Regional Division

In union with the community, our mission is to inspire all students to develop a passion for learning and to become socially responsible citizens in a changing society. Our commitment is to provide relevant, challenging life-based learning opportunities. We will issue educational warranties as competencies are demonstrated.

Characteristics of a Mission Statement

- Expresses a simple, practical statement
- Points to the central purpose
- Expresses personality and character of organization
- Speaks to the membership of the organization
- Highlights the organization's uniqueness
- Indicates a public commitment
- Is the keystone for planning
- Based on central values and beliefs

Developing a Mission Statement

In developing a mission statement, it is important to include the whole school community. It is possible to develop a mission statement using a simple process.

- Individually, on paper, answer the questions:
  - What is our purpose?
  - Why do we exist?
- In pairs, write a consensus statement about the purpose of the organization. Then jointly write a statement in groups of four, eight, etc. Each step involves discussion and consensus.
- Continue by expanding the size of the group until consensus has been reached with the whole group.
- Someone is delegated to write the polished statement which is returned for group validation.

The Rotarian Four-Way Test asks four critical questions that can be used to focus work on planning and vision/mission setting.

- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

After the mission statement is developed, it should feature in planning and implementation of educational plans.

Keeping Mission and Vision Alive

The great paradox of the act of creating mission and vision statements is that they often die as soon as they are finished. Members of the organization, be it a school jurisdiction, school or school council, must work to keep the vision in sight and part of the daily operation of the organization.

- Ask all schools in the jurisdiction, staff and school council to validate the statement. Have suggestions sent back to the writing team for revisions. Have all schools and the divisional office communicate the new statement frequently in as many ways as possible.
- Make the key terms a big part of divisional or school marketing programs. It is a great source of descriptors of "who you really are."
- Derive a slogan or motto and a logo which stem from the statements. They can be incorporated into letterhead and brochures.
- Use the vision statement as a criterion for determining the strategies and outcomes to be included in the next edition of the education plan.
- Use the mission statement in recruitment of staff. Have potential staff provide statements of how they would put the mission statement or vision statement into action.
- Revisit the statements at annual meetings.
- Ask staff to use statements in their annual growth plans.
- Ask schools to revisit their mission and vision statements to ensure that they are congruent with the new jurisdictional statements and vice-versa.
- Ask everyone for ways to keep the statements alive and meaningfully employed in everyday activities.
- Model use of the statements as a guide for decision making.
- Make them visible in the school — motto, slogan, logo.

Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional Division

Together, we educate and nurture each student in a Catholic/Christian community to become a successful, responsible and caring contributor in our changing world.

Mission of Calgary Board of Education

To ensure individual student development through effective education.

Foothills School Division

Mission:
Growth for all through quality education in a caring place where potential and well-being count.

Mandate:
We are responsible for ensuring that our students learn the skills and knowledge needed to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of society.

Elk Island Public Schools

The mission … is to achieve educational excellence in preparing students for change and future challenges.

Fort McMurray Catholic Schools

Within a responsive Catholic Christian environment, we will deliver high priority educational services, enabling each student to be a lifelong learner, successfully able to meet the challenges of the future with confidence.

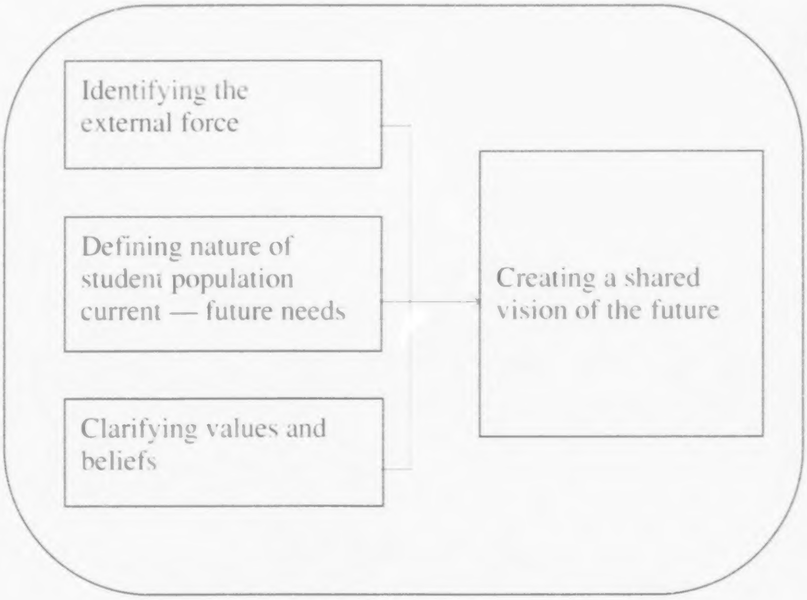
Powerful words can . . . energize school districts and schools to see the direction they are going and what they will look like when they arrive at their destination.

— Larry Lezotte,
Vice President,
Effective School Products

Characteristics of a Vision Statement

- Simple, but complete statements
- Challenging — causing participants to reach
- Long-term in scope
- Owned by all members of the group
- Able to shape behaviour and actions
- Tangible image and easy to picture
- Memorable and clear — not open to misinterpretation
- Mobilizing — demands a response or call to action
- Guide and test for decision making
- Tied to the value of the organization
- Linked to student needs

There are many processes for developing a vision statement. Larry Reynolds, in *A Practical Guide to Effective Site-Based Management* (1993), shows vision as part of a strategic planning model which begins with a careful analysis of the environment and the needs of the students.


Identifying the external force
Defining nature of student population current — future needs
Clarifying values and beliefs
Creating a shared vision of the future

Strategic Plans — Developing Vision

Workshop idea #5: Developing a Vision Statement is found on page 38 of this chapter.

Focus on Goals and Goal Setting

Establishing goals for a school jurisdiction, school or school council is an important step in the journey toward using the school-based decision making approach to improve teaching and learning.

It is critical that goal setting takes the local or school situation into account. Participants in the process should start with an analysis of what is needed for the specific school or jurisdiction and build goals to meet these needs. After this process is complete, the goals should be compared with provincial and jurisdiction goals. The development process is essential to ensure ownership and commitment to the goals. Ownership and commitment result from thoughtful participation in the process; they are further enhanced when the goals are used to develop plans to meet the needs identified by participants.

Alberta Education outlines the provincial plan for education in *Meeting the Challenge: Three-Year Plan for Education.* A statement of the current goals is included in the sidebar.

School boards are required to submit three-year education plans and an annual education results report which align with provincial goals. School plans which align with school board plans are to address three of the provincial goals. A detailed description of this process is found in the *Guide for Developing School Board Three-Year Education Plans and Annual Education Results Reports*.

Setting school-based goals is a test for school-based decision making. Goals for the school must reflect the needs, values and beliefs of the school community. They should be developed through a process that reflects school-based decision-making principles. This process:

- involves all the players
- is a process of consensus or collaboration
- is based on improving student learning
- is grounded in the vision for the school.

The process for setting the goals is nearly as important as the goals themselves; the process ensures commitment to the goals, strengthens the teams and develops a collaborative culture.

Sample goals from jurisdictions and schools are found on pages 14–16.

Workshop Idea #6: Goal Setting is found on page 40.

Meeting the Challenge IV: Three-Year Plan for Education in Alberta 1997/98–1999/2000

Goal 1: *Education is focused on what students need to learn and students achieve high standards.*

Goal 2: *Parents and the community have the opportunity to be involved in the governance and delivery of a restructured education system.*

Goal 3: *Students have access to the support services they require.*

Goal 4: *Teaching in Alberta consistently is of high quality.*

Goal 5: *Information technology is integrated into education to enhance student learning, and increase efficiency and flexibility of delivery.*

Goal 6: *The education funding system is fair, equitable and affordable.*

Goal 7: *The education system is open and accountable for achievement of results and use of resources.*

Goal 8: *Alberta Education is managed effectively and efficiently to achieve government goals.*

Focus on Teams and Team Building

Effective teams are a cornerstone to a collaborative system of decision making. As new roles are established and a new culture emerges, there is a growing focus on teams as a way of working. Many of these teams have a membership that has been expanded to include all of the partners in education. This necessitates some team-building activities to develop groups that know and trust each other and are able to work effectively together. The sample of activities that follows can be used to facilitate team building and may be used at the beginning of a team meeting or during the meeting.

- Paired Interviews

Interview a partner — leader may suggest questions. Introduce partner to the group.

- Business Cards

Each participant designs a business card. The centre has name and a drawing to represent the participant's birthplace. The four corners contain information relevant to the group's task. For example, a problem about site-based decision making, an educational issue, individual strength or a strength of the team.

Variations — Draw two of these corner items and circulate through the group to find similar ideas.

- Create a Metaphor (Simile)

Individually or in pairs, create and present a metaphor; e.g., "My role in site-based decision making is (like). . ."

- The Flower Activity (Small Group)

Group draws a flower on flipchart paper with a large centre and a petal for each member. In the centre, write all the characteristics that are shared by all group members; in the petals, write those characteristics or attributes that are unique to each individual.

- Complete Sentence Stems
  - – My best learning experience was. . .
  - – A sport I like is. . .
  - – My favorite book is ___________ because. . .
  - – You can trust me because. . .
  - – I value you because. . .

- Developing a Collaborative Mission/Vision Statement or Developing Goals for the Group

As described in the workshop ideas, these activities not only develop a product, they also strengthen the team.

Purpose of Team Building:

- Opportunity to express ideas and anxieties
- Establish verbal territory
- Group acceptance
- Practise listening with respect
- Develops trust
- Builds consensus.

Characteristics of High-Performing Teams:

- shared and agreed-upon challenging goals
- results-driven team membership
- collaborative climate that builds trust
- competent team members
- unified commitment to the work of the team
- ability to deal with conflict
- recognition and support of the team
- positive links with other teams within the organization
- sound procedures
- appropriate leadership
- individual development
- regular review of team progress
- a sense of adventure and fun
- celebrate success.

Other Sources for Team-Building Activities:

- *Site-Based Decision Making*, James Mitchell (1990)
- *The Encyclopedia of Group Activities*, William Pfeiffer, University Associates (1989)
- *50 Activities Team Building*, Mike Woodcock, Gower Publishing (1989)
- *More Than 50 Ways to Build Team Consensus*, R. Bruce Williams, Skylight Training & Publishing (1993)

Skills for Team Building

Building Consensus

Building consensus takes time; it is not an overnight task. It is dependent upon a climate of trust and a desire to work together to come up with the best solution. Consensus is both the process that people use as well as the product of such a process.

A clear and purposeful vision is not only a necessary condition for consensus but it's also the first consensus task. This can be accomplished using Workshop #5: Developing a Vision Statement, found on page 38.

The consensus approach has its place even in difficult situations, but it is not always appropriate. It must be used judiciously. Your team should use the consensus technique when:

- there is no clear answer.
- there is no single expert in the group.
- commitment to the decision is essential.
- sufficient time is available.

Consensus decisions can be facilitated by team players who:

- press for reasons and data to support decisions.
- discourage the use of other decision-making tactics (for example, voting and one-person rule).
- periodically summarize and test possible decisions with the group.
- are willing to go along with the team's consensus even though they may disagree with it.

Workshop #3: Developing the Skills for Consensus, found on pages 29–32, can be used to practise consensus building

CONSENSUS

What it is

- Find the highest level of agreement without dividing the participants into factions

Why use consensus

- Not for all decisions — is one tool
- Gets involvement — uses all ideas — need diversity
- Generates commitment to action and to each other
- Helps teams work TOGETHER in a positive way to develop mutual trust and understanding
- Identifies areas of agreement
- Chance to discuss the issue
- Know how everyone stands on an issue — this is important when it's time to create action plans

Consensus Process

- Clear statement of problem
- Brainstorm
- Discuss each item. Clarify. Don't jump to solutions.
- Categorize, narrow focus, eliminate items, modify
- Select final statements. Use consensus voting.

Rules of Consensus-seeking

- No averaging
- No horse-trading
- No majority rule
- Keep everyone involved
- Don't give up

Consensus Voting

5	All for it, can be a leader
4	All for it, can give a lot of support
3	For the idea, will support
2	Let's talk about it
1	I'm not sure but I trust the opinion of the group
Fist	NO! (must give an alternative)

The numbers represent the number of fingers held up in the voting process.

Conflict Resolution

The skill of conflict resolution is critical to any successful team. Conflict is inevitable in groups and it can be negative or positive depending on how the conflict is resolved or managed in the group. Individuals apply a variety of conflict strategies: withdraw from the conflict; suppress the conflict or refuse to acknowledge it, win at any cost, compromise or negotiate to find an acceptable solution, or win/win through a collaborative problem-solving approach.

Team happiness is not the absence of conflict but the ability to deal with conflict.

Workshop Ideas #4: Developing the Skills for Conflict Resolution, found on page 33, suggests some strategies teams can use to work on their conflict resolution skills.

Effective Meetings

Good teams practise effective meeting strategies. One of the disadvantages of SBDM that people often mention is the tremendous increase in meetings and in meeting time.

Some hints and tips for effective meetings:

- Start on time.
- Distinguish between meeting types: information, validational, planning, problem solving, decision making, training, celebration.
- Prepare in advance. Set the agenda. Send notices.
- Create a priority order for agenda items.
- Don't "Read to People."
- Set time limits for items or for debate. Limit number of times for speakers.
- Use a variety of techniques, including: debate, brainstorming, presentation, round robin response.
- Make a visible agenda, or agenda map and charts.
- Decide upon the decision-making approach.
- Post decisions or products of the meeting — be clear about decisions.
- Use, but don't abuse, subcommittees (don't redo their work).
- Encourage participants to do their homework.
- Create an action sheet at close of meetings for tasks to be done.
- Stop on time.
- Create a clear set of minutes.
- Evaluate meeting processes.

Meeting Variations

- The 20-minute meeting
- The "stand-up" meeting
- The one-issue meeting.

How to Make Win/Win Work

- *Find out why they need what they want*
- *Find out where the differences are*
- *What are the options*
- *Cooperate to find the solution*

— Helen Cornelius and
Shoshana Faire
*Everyone Can Win:
How to Resolve Conflict*, 1991

Resources

Everyone Can Win, Helena Cornelius and Shoshana Faire, Simon & Schuster, 1991

People Skills, Robert Bolton, Simon & Schuster, 1986

Hints for Conflict Resolution:

- Work on the relationship separate from the problem
- Build empathy
  - small tactics
  - listen to the other person
- Share an activity to build
- Choose an appropriate location
- Watch your timing
- Be an active listener
  - ask questions
  - check back
  - summarize
  - check and paraphrase
  - try again
  - watch body language
- Acknowledge their point of view
- Use I statements to tell the person how you feel
- Take responsibility
- Redirect the agenda
- Don't deny your emotions
- Find options.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: St. Albert Protestant Separate School District No. 6

Ruth Le Blanc, Superintendent

VISION

Students:
- achieve at a high level
- are satisfied with schooling in St. Albert Protestant Schools
- feel competent and confident
- demonstrate respect for their teachers' education
- feel secure in their learning environments
- understand and meet expectations of curriculum
- demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving
- have a choice of futures
- feel they belong in their school
- advocate for their school and their district
- are partners in their school.

Staff:
- are committed to service of students and parents
- have high levels of satisfaction with their professional work in the district
- are committed to professional growth
- are partners in the school and district
- are committed to district growth and development
- feel appreciated and are proud advocates of themselves and their district
- have confidence to take considered risks on behalf of students, parents and programs
- have confidence in themselves, the district and the board
- see parents as partners in the students' education.

Parents:
- feel that they are partners in the school district
- advocate for the school district
- have high levels of confidence in programs and staff
- have the information necessary to enable them to be partners in their child's education
- support and promote the work of school councils.

Community:
- sees the district as a significant and effective agency
- believes that the district demonstrates effective and efficient use of resources
- advocates for the district
- believes that the district is preparing students for productive work and effective citizenship.

BELIEFS

In our commitment to public education, and to maximize student potential, WE BELIEVE THAT:

- each student is entitled to a quality education
- each student is unique
- each student has worth and dignity
- each student has rights and responsibilities
- each student is entitled to equity of educational opportunity
- we must be responsive to the needs of our community
- we must practise participative decision making.

MANDATE

The board of trustees of St. Albert Protestant schools is responsible to deliver educational programs that respond to the learning needs of local students, their parents and the community. The board is responsible for ensuring that all children in the jurisdiction receive a high quality education.

MISSION

In a responsive environment, committed to excellence in education, we are proud to serve our community by providing superior programs and services that enable our students to meet the challenges of the future.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Black Gold Regional Division No. 18

Lowell Throndson, Superintendent

Mission Statement

As members of the board of education in the Black Gold Regional Division, we commit ourselves to working with staff members and other relevant stakeholder groups to provide the highest possible standard of educational opportunities for our students. Our goal is to help students fulfil personal aspirations while they learn how to become lifelong learners and contributing members of society.

Vision and Beliefs

As members of the board of education, we believe that:

- Our main task is to help provide the highest possible standard of educational opportunities for students within the division through the use of available resources.
- Each person possesses inherent worth and dignity deserving of respect.
- Each student has the right to an education which addresses individual needs and individual potential.
- Along with the right to an education, there is a responsibility for the student to attend regularly and to abide by expectations for student conduct identified in the *School Act*, Board of Education policies and school regulations.
- It is important for the board to help promote the existence of school environments which instil a love of learning, a striving for excellence and the development of a healthy self-concept.
- The degree of individual achievement depends to a large extent upon student ability and motivation as well as support from the home.
- The development of interpersonal knowledge, skills and attitudes deserves purposeful attention in schools. Qualities such as honesty, acceptance of others, cooperation and trustworthiness help foster harmonious relationships within the school and the community.
- Schools perform a vital function in society as they serve to transmit important social and cultural values, and to assist students in becoming responsible and productive citizens.

Black Gold Regional Division is located south of Edmonton and includes the communities of Calmar, Leduc, New Sarepta, Thorsby and Warburg. It has 25 schools serving 8,797 students.

- The school is not alone in having impact upon student attitudes and achievements. Other important sources of influence include the family, the peer group, the media, the church and the community.

- Student learning is enhanced when the efforts and expectations of all agencies affecting children complement each other and when the agencies communicate effectively with each other.

- Effective teaching reflects the use of a variety of instructional methods and is influenced greatly by the learning needs of students.

- Successful schools maintain a strong sense of community and provide a safe and orderly environment for learning. They communicate a clearly stated, simply understood statement of purpose. They encourage parents and local community members to become active and supportive participants in the life of the school through the provision of opportunities for formal and informal involvement.

- The board acknowledges the importance of its role in stating goals and expectations for the division.

- The board supports the exercise of autonomy and flexibility by staff members in determining the means by which requirements set by the board can be best met.

- The board recognizes the need for it to identify programs, resources and facilities which will be available in all division schools in accordance with the division's philosophy and policies and with the principle of equity.

- A spirit of cooperation between and among schools and a willingness to work for the common good are qualities worthy of strong support by the board and by all people involved in educational activity within the division.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Elk Island Public Schools Regional Division No. 14

Terry Gunderson, Superintendent

Education Plan

The following five priorities/goals, together with the three provincial goals, are the key to the school education plan.

- **Relevant, High-quality Programs and Services**
  Provide students with high-quality programs and services that are responsive to a wide range of individual student needs.
- **Optimize Resources**
  Utilize available people and financial resources to maximum student advantage.
- **Effective Use of Technology**
  Use technology to enhance instruction and school system management.
- **Public Support**
  Strengthen public involvement in and support for our educational system.
- **Manage Restructuring**
  Manage effectively the challenges associated with government restructuring of education.

Parkland School Division No. 70

Dave Young, Superintendent

Goals

- To improve student achievement
- To increase staff and community satisfaction with their involvement in the decision-making process and with Parkland School Division
- To improve the quality and timeliness of services provided to students, staff, parents and the community.

Northern Lights School Division No. 69

Value and Belief Statements

Ed Wittchen, Superintendent

Value Statements

In Northern Lights School Division we value:

- passion for learning — joy and excitement in learning
- caring for others — concern for and healthy relationships with others
- respect — holding self, others, community and environment in high esteem
- trustworthiness — honesty and integrity
- excellence — personal excellence through lifelong learning
- commitment — dedicated acceptance of responsibility
- integrity — fairness, sincerity and honor in all interactions
- empathy — a caring attitude
- fairness — equity and justice for all
- work ethic — responsibility and accountability for personal excellence
- creativity — curiosity, originality and innovation
- perseverance — constant and continued belief in every child.

Belief Statements

In Northern Lights School Division we believe:

- each and every person can learn
- education is a shared responsibility
- each learner is unique
- learning takes place both within and out of the school
- learning is lifelong
- everyone wants to succeed and do well
- every student deserves the best we can offer — always
- the family is the major influence in a child's development
- the learner-teacher relationship is the core of the school experiences
- a healthy community of learners promotes responsibility
- accountability is necessary.

Northern Lights Mission Statement

Working together to help every student learn and excel.

Goal Statements

The goals of the Northern Lights School Division are to strive to:

- maximize student achievement
- increase parent and community roles in schools
- coordinate children's services program
- facilitate improved teaching
- ensure that all schools are adequately and equitably funded
- maintain an open and accountable system
- integrate technology skills into every aspect of program delivery.

Prairie Rose Regional Division No. 8 Key Strategies

Keith Jones, Superintendent

The proposed division key strategies may be approved by the board of trustees for the three-year period 1997–1999. They have been developed in response to local needs and with the provincial goals and designated strategies as a focus. As a major component of the planning framework, they will be reviewed and adjusted annually. At the school level, the strategies serve as the linkage between school-level activities and those of the division and Alberta Education.

— Prairie Rose
Regional Division

- Increase level of student achievement; emphasize mathematics.
- Enhance stakeholder understanding of site-based decision making, review the basis for equitable allocation of funds and refine format for the annual school plan.
- Further develop the *Framework for Student Learning* — a description of the teaching and learning process.
- Revise division policy/practices; reporting of student learning.
- Enhance the level and quality of stakeholder involvement in the planning for and delivery of programs and services.
- Expand the use of performance measures in the planning process with a particular focus on student achievement targets and accountability.
- Enhance the coordinated delivery of community and agency services to all students.
- Enhance stakeholder understanding of the graded curriculum and implications for individual learning outcomes, and reporting of academic and personal growth.
- Expand the use of technology in instruction, learning and division operations.
- Increase community knowledge of division philosophy, goals, culture and program opportunities through improved marketing and communication techniques.
- Expand the career and technology studies offerings.
- Expand opportunities for the professional development of staff inclusive of programs offered through the regional consortium.
- Provide safe, efficient transportation routes that maximize student attendance at neighboring schools.
- Develop criteria and practices to improve quality of teaching and performance of leadership staff.
- Increase the percentage of high school course completions and reduce numbers of student school withdrawals.
- Adopt a student behavior policy requiring that schools develop and communicate a student behaviour management policy.
- Further nurture the wellness and recognition of staff.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Blackie School, Foothills School Division No. 38

Harry Morrison, Principal

Introduction

Blackie School is a small rural school located 30 km east of High River in southern Alberta. We are the eastern most school in the Foothills School Division No. 38. Blackie School has a wide and diverse school population. Students come from four different geographical areas:

- village of Blackie (population: 303)
- farming community around Blackie
- acreage children predominately from the Gladys Ridge area (south/east of Calgary)
- a group from the town of High River.

Blackie School has undergone significant change. We became a Grade 1–8 school (the previous 28 years it was a Grade 1–9 school). The Grade 9s were transferred to the new high school in High River. For most of these students, it meant transferring away from a school they attended since ECS. For the parents, it meant more commuting and that their children would be traveling greater distances on school buses.

Currently, there are 225 students in Grades 1–8 from 129 families. Many of these families have more than one child in the school and some have children that were transferred to the High River High School. These were parents that the school needed to reach and support in a positive way.

As well, due to recent changes in the demographics (greater percentage of students coming in from the acreages) it was felt that the school should communicate more effectively with this sector.

There also was a feeling on the part of some staff members and parents in the community, that the school needed to improve public relations with parents and others (other tax payers who do not have children currently in school). This perception was verified by a survey conducted in May 1996.

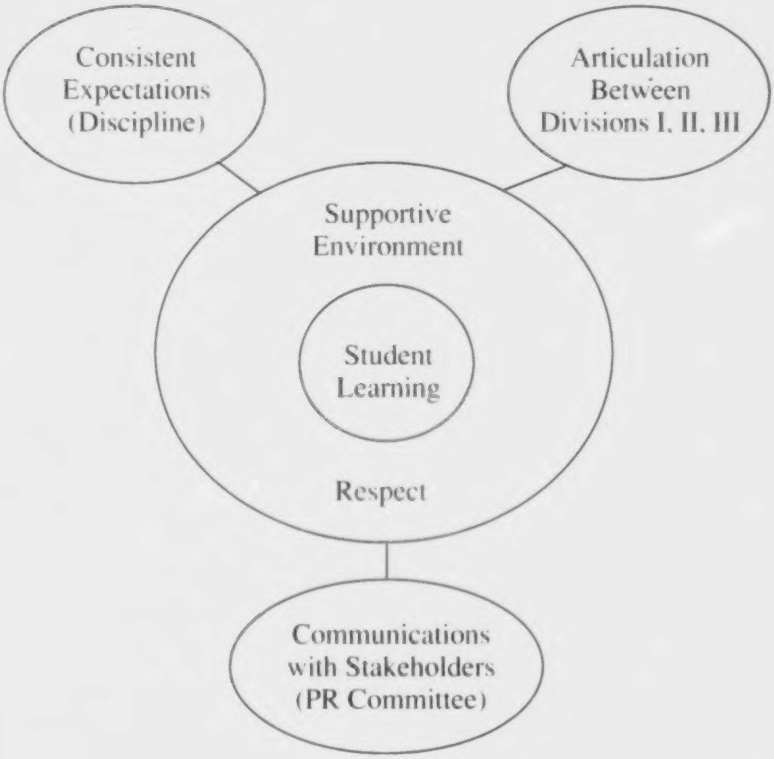
To add to this, there was a 30 per cent change in staff which included a new administrative team. The previous administration and some staff accepted new positions at the new school in High River.

Planning

In May 1996, the new/old staff (22 in total) met to formulate goals for the 96/97 school year. They were placed in randomly chosen groups of four to five participants and were asked to list as many goals as possible. These lists were posted and from these lists it was apparent that three goals were common to all groups:

- to improve communications with all stakeholders in the Blackie School community (public relations)
- to improve communications and contact between the divisions in the school
- to re-evaluate the discipline policy and make recommendations for improvement (see diagram).

Blackie School Goals
1996–97


Consistent Expectations (Discipline)
Articulation Between Divisions I, II, III
Supportive Environment
Student Learning
Respect
Communications with Stakeholders (PR Committee)

The Plan

In recent times, a number of parents and staff members felt that Blackie School had suffered a loss of confidence with the community. In order to deal with the perceived need, the staff and the school council needed to initiate steps to improve the school's status in the community. More contact between the school and the school community was needed. The following activities were planned:

- "Pre-school" Contact
- Terry Fox Run
- Book Fair
- Special Evening
- Hepatitis B & Flu Shots
- Alberta Discovery Project
- Paired Reading Program
- Halloween & UNICEF
- Remembrance Day Assembly
- Family Fun Raiser
- Christmas Craft Fair
- Christmas Concert
- Operation Christmas Child
- Blackie & District Chamber of Commerce
- Outdoor Skating Rink

There is now a strong belief on the part of the staff and community that Blackie School has indeed shown that "Public Education Works." The support shown for the initiatives in "The Plan" was incredible. Blackie School has become the centre of the Blackie community.

Parents and community members are confident that Blackie School is doing the best job that it possibly can for students.

Many of these activities were ones that the school previously organized but the increased focus led to greater interaction between the school and the school community.

Eastbrook Elementary in Brooks has 456 students from ECS to Grade 6.

Eastbrook Elementary School, Grasslands Regional Division No. 6

Vicki Hall, Vice-Principal

Model for Teams and Decision Making

Model for Decision Making 1997-98

Five school planning areas will be established that will allow us to focus on all aspects of the school. One team will be in charge of each planning area. All school goals will fit into one of these planning areas:

- curriculum and instruction
- meeting special needs
- public relations and communication
- school environment
- motivation and wellness.

This method of organization allows us to have an organizational model in place that can handle issues and goals as they arise without reorganizing from year to year. It also provides us with major focus areas when we undertake our next performance audit.

A monthly meeting time is established for all teams in order that plans will be ongoing and parents can become more active participants.

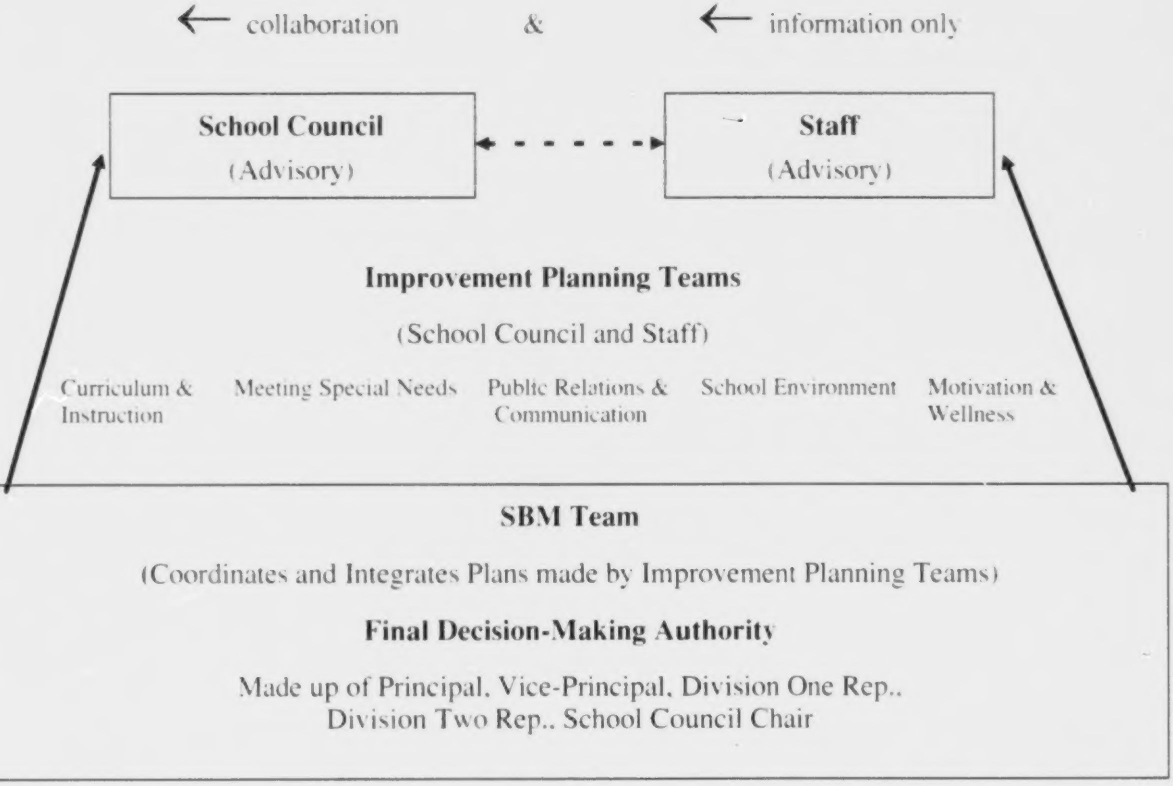
Teams are asked to report progress at staff meetings and school council meetings, at which time feedback would also occur. Teams are asked to receive the okay from the SBDM team prior to implementing major decisions that will affect any group of stakeholders.

As we continue to develop in site-based management, we will continue to monitor, evaluate and adjust the processes and procedures used for decision making and attempt to focus all decisions on improved student learning.

The following diagram illustrates the composition and relationship of the teams.

Eastbrook School Decision-Making Model

School council and staff as advisory bodies; improvement planning teams as working bodies; site-based management team as coordinator, integrator and decision-making body


← collaboration
&
← information only
School Council
(Advisory)
Staff
(Advisory)
Improvement Planning Teams
(School Council and Staff)
Curriculum & Instruction
Meeting Special Needs
Public Relations & Communication
School Environment
Motivation & Wellness
SBM Team
(Coordinates and Integrates Plans made by Improvement Planning Teams)
Final Decision-Making Authority
Made up of Principal, Vice-Principal, Division One Rep., Division Two Rep., School Council Chair

St. Anthony School in Drayton Valley has 541 ECS to Grade 12 students.

School Leadership Team

The school leadership team is comprised of a group of teachers and administrators who are interested in and committed to school improvement as a means of enhancing student learning and achievement.

The school leadership team is an important element of school governance and the members have a voice in the decision-making process including budgetary items.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- to attend regular meetings
- to bring ideas to the discussion table that may result in a more effective school and improved student learning
- to gather ideas and concerns from colleagues and bring them to the team for discussion
- to model professionalism
- to support initiatives undertaken by the team
- to chair or co-chair one of the committees: student, staff, Catholicity or education
- to maintain a committee binder containing agendas, minutes, committee goals, etc.
- to ensure that the school continues to offer leading edge programs.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: St. Anthony School, Good Shepherd RCSRD No. 13

Laurette Setterlund, Principal

Teams in the School

A leadership team was designed to facilitate SBDM. This team includes teachers, administrators and the school council chair. Teachers interested in being on the front line of decision making volunteer to be part of the team. The team meets about every six weeks (breakfast meetings and/or half-day meetings) to discuss issues. Each team member chairs a committee made up of other staff members. Each staff member (professional and support) sits on a committee and consequently has some input into decisions made at the school. Some decisions are made at the committee level, others are made at the team level, and others are made at the leadership team level. The diagram illustrates the levels and relationships.

Factors that Assisted the Process

The members of the leadership team attended two workshops on SBDM sponsored by the ATA. This was essential so that everyone had an understanding. Later in the year (1995-96), Bill Franz conducted a whole staff workshop for half a day, thereby supplying information to all stakeholders.

Problems and Benefits

Finding the time for workshops and for meetings is problematic. We don't want all meetings to be after-hours but the reality is that the majority of them are.

Budget preparation with a team approach is still a challenge. Input from team members and committees is easy but it seems that the final number crunching is done by administrators. I hope this will eventually change.

Teachers have the opportunity to be involved at a maximum or minimum level and everyone is involved.

EDUCATION

- Education Week
- Student Evaluation
- School Evaluation
- Student Service
- Discipline
- Public Relations
- Enrichment programs
- Awards/Incentives
- Scholarships

CATHOLICITY

- Celebrations
- Retreats
- Staff Spiritual Development
- School Masses
- Religious Educational Programs
- Parish Liaison

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM
St. Anthony School

STAFF

- Professional Development
- ATA
- REPC
- Friendship Friday
- Staff Fund
- Staff Development
- Social Functions
- Staff Recognition

STUDENT

- Sports Day
- Milk Program
- Concerts
- Student Union
- Peer Support
- Environment Club
- Library Club
- Intramurals
- Interscholastic Sports
- Student Recognition

SCHOOL COUNCIL

- Cultural Events
- Student Evaluation
- Discipline
- Public Relations
- St. Anthony Family Day
- School Supplies
- School Lunch Program
- Band Parents
- Field Trips
- Staff/Parent Recognition
- Fund Raising

SBDM Practices in Alberta: A Journey Towards Shared Decision Making at Elizabeth Barrett School, Rocky View School Division No. 41

Deb Rougeau Bell/Deborah McLaren

Team Building

A major goal within the past two years has been to develop team building within our school community. As we have worked through these two years, three stages of development have emerged. We have termed the three stages in our journey:

- finding our way
- developing who I am along the way
- arriving at the classroom — the link to learning.

Three challenges were identified:

- Need for staff training. Leadership, facilitation skills, team building, understanding group process and conflict resolution were the tools the staff desired in order to be more effective as team members.
- The time required to effectively put shared decision making in place.
- How to assimilate shared decision making into the daily demands of our school lives to return the time investment and focus upon improving student learning.

Finding Our Way

The first stage, "Finding Our Way," focused upon organizational structures essential to generating a common understanding, getting comfortable with the environment and becoming familiar with the mechanics of shared decision making. A great deal of time was devoted to developing a shared decision-making model that reflected both the characteristics and beliefs essential to effective decision making as well as the process and frameworks for staff and parental involvement. Work in this area was mindful of the way we operate as a staff. The role of administrators was that of facilitator with the intent of leading the team through a process toward a model that was both meaningful and effective. This first step in the process of changing the role of the administrator required our administrative team to continually listen, dialogue and reflect upon where we were as a staff in our learning and where to go next.

As a staff, we worked through many sessions in developing the mechanics of shared decision making, including a definition, beliefs and characteristics, and process and model. Levels of involvement were agreed upon by both staff and parents. During this first year, many hours were spent by staff focusing upon what seemed at the time to be quite remote from the day-to-day teaching and learning. At this point in the process, staff were worried that "Finding Our Way" may in fact lead us away from the classroom. A crucial role for administrators was to encourage and support teachers in their work that would allow them to make this leap of faith. Providing time for teams to meet during the school day helped to validate the process as well as to keep the workload and time commitment at a manageable level.

At the beginning of our journey, planning teams were created to promote team building and to provide a framework for management of school goals. This structure has helped to facilitate shared decision making, staff involvement, initiative and ownership. The planning teams structure was chosen instead of one site-based management team because of our belief that membership on a team satisfies a variety of personal needs such as ownership, appreciation, support and recognition. It was also a way of integrating the many givens in the lives of a school (school education plans, curriculum implementation) to school initiatives and our desire to build a strong school team. Being a member of a team develops trust and responsibility.

Who I am Along the Way

As administrators, we sit on the planning teams. In the first year, the group seemed to rely on us to provide direction and at times to just make the decision. As we moved into the second stage, "Developing Who I Am Along the Way," the staff developed leadership and group skills. As a result, our role has become that of an equal member of the group, providing information as requested. The team leaders now plan and prepare for their meetings and act as facilitators for their planning team. It has been important for the administrative team to support and encourage the team leaders in their growth. The leaders are at different stages in their own development; therefore, depending upon the individual and the issue, administration takes on a variety of roles, at times directing, at times coaching, at other times simply delegating and supporting.

An important aspect of the planning teams is the composition of the team. Every staff member is on a planning team. As the first year was primarily focused upon developing a model and beginning to use it, it was definitely a year of "Finding Our Way." It was during the second year that we began to really focus upon the people in the process and the interpersonal skills required to operate as a high-performing team.

As a result of this intensive focus on personal development as a team member, staff are becoming more confident in their role as group members and participants in the decision-making process. Another significant and essential result has been the development of trust. The growing confidence of the group in its ability to make effective decisions in a collaborative manner has also empowered the staff. Each member of the group is integral to successful functioning of the group. Staff members have become more reflective about their roles within the group, how they function within the group and how they work with other members in making decisions. Staff leadership on the teams is resulting in a sense of accomplishment and pride in our many successes. It has been exciting to watch how the planning team and grade team leaders are becoming skilled in their leadership strategies.

Another important aspect of the composition of the planning teams and this process of working in teams is the emergence and evolution of roles. The teams consist of the team leader, at least one representative from each grade team (ECS–Grade 4), at least one support staff and a parent representative from the school council. This composition has become crucial, as it has provided the communication and feedback loops vital to our shared decision-making process. It has been during this second year, with the increased knowledge and expertise that staff have gained through training, that these roles have emerged. Representatives are responsible for gathering input from their teams or parents, as well

Professional Development Workshops:

Team Building (Whole Staff)
- characteristics of effective teams
- group process skills
- becoming more reflective of one's participation in a group
- stages in team building
- consensus building

Conflict Resolution (Whole Staff)
- nature and causes of conflict
- conflict resolution styles
- dealing with conflict
- skills for collaborative conflict resolution
- problem solving process for conflict resolution
- teaching conflict resolution to students

Facilitation Skills (Team Leaders)
- adult learners and implications for successful meetings
- techniques for planning, preparing and facilitating a good meeting
- a framework for reflecting after facilitating a meeting

Additional Team Leader Training
- change theory
- dealing with difficult people

Elizabeth Barrett, an elementary school in Cochrane, is part of the Rocky View School Division. The school has 458 ECS to Grade 4 students.

as communicating the ongoing discussions, considerations and decisions from planning team meetings. In this second year there is a coming together of teams. Previously, the grade teams and planning teams worked along parallel lines. Now, there is a strong link that has integrated their roles and common goals in the school. As parent reps were new additions to the team structure this year, we expect the same close linkage to evolve over the next year.

It has also been a journey for parents as they find their way. We have worked with the school council to develop a framework which outlines the level of parental involvement in our school. This has provided the basis for defining the parents' roles in our shared decision-making process. As parents continue to become more comfortable and the parent reps on the planning teams move them into the second stage, their roles will be refined.

Arriving at the Classroom

As we have worked through these stages, the roles of administrators and staff have evolved. The administrator is very much a facilitator of others making decisions, very much one who shares information and responsibility; the role is collaborative in nature with a strong emphasis on support and acting as a coach and mentor in the development of leadership on staff. The staff have become more collaborative, not only knowledgeable about teaching and learning but also knowledgeable about group process and decision making. They are no longer only the implementors of decisions, but are active participants in the actual making of the decisions.

Their classroom perspective has broadened to a whole-school perspective. The teachers in our school have two roles: implementing teaching and learning, and making decisions about teaching and learning. The latter has brought them out of the classroom, but also has helped them to "arrive" at the classroom leading them to the third stage as they work on high-performing teams to address key issues which link to learning and make a difference in the classroom, and so we continue along our way but with a learning community that has a strong sense of team, direction and commitment on our journey towards lifelong learning.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Conrich School, Rocky View School Division No. 41

Wayne C. Harlton, Principal

Site-based decision making is a difficult concept to introduce to a staff that has not traditionally operated in this way. The literature supports varying interpretations of SBDM. The staff of Conrich School have experienced an interesting journey as we move toward a site-based managed school. Our SBDM is more than budgeting or shared decision making. It continues to evolve and includes more open/honest communication, higher levels of trust, a focus on teamwork and teams, support for individual professional development, behavioural expectations for students and staff and improved student achievement.

My administrative experiences over the past 20 years have taught me to have a clear vision and the plan to go with it. Three years ago, the school staff appeared to be seeking a rededication and support as they moved towards a site-based managed school. My doctoral research centred on the development of a Transformational Model of Participatory Management. I had the opportunity to apply some of this in a classroom research approach.

Conrich School has 335 students in Grades 1–5. There is a large contingent of special education students and special needs assistants. An active and supportive school council has evolved along with close to 80 parent volunteers. An early task was to find a full time parent volunteer to coordinate the volunteers. A parent stepped forward and the reorganization of the parent volunteer program was easier and more successful than expected.

Anyone who enters a new situation is in a position to make change. It is expected that change will occur. Long-term ability to successfully make change in schools is correlated to the change, plans and vision put forward in the first four months (September to December).

In June 1994, the Conrich staff (in small groups) created the basis for what would be the behaviour plan and code of conduct for the school. The need was based on the staff's desire to have an environment with less chaos and a consistent discipline approach. This effort involved feedback from the staff and a steering committee of teachers. The staff's efforts resulted in a published behaviour plan that served as a guide for students, parents and staff.

The vision for Conrich School is based on a set of beliefs that include the following:

- high standards for program and student achievement
- an organization that exemplifies synergism based on team work and cooperation
- an environment that supports the professional and personal well being of all staff members
- an effective relationship with parents based on respect, openness and understanding
- a safe, caring and enjoyable environment.

Principals are to be effective/open communicators and facilitate participative decision making. On a systemic level, I would have to impact the environmental-attitudinal milieu through the creation of trust, collaboration and empowerment. An increased level of participation would result in the creation of a new Conrich School culture.

As a site-based school administrator, I like to create inspirational thoughts to help guide my actions. One of these is, "I can't change world events or a colleague's personal situation but I can give staff members the time, resources and personal support to effectively make change, develop programs, enhance student learning, meet their professional and personal goals, and enjoy the time we have together."

— Wayne Harlton

From this point, we were able to use our teacher and staff committee to make change and guide other school initiatives. For example, we have a school-based professional development committee that does an excellent job. The committee members solicit suggestions from the staff and organize activities to meet their needs. Team building, student-led conferencing, portfolio development and the development of a language arts continuum are but a few examples.

A key factor in establishing an environment that could embrace SBDM was the reorganizing of the timetable to facilitate grade team planning/prep time. This planning time resulted in exciting initiatives that impact our program and student achievement. A focus on "Every moment with parents or community members is a public relations moment," has helped positively focus the school. A new private school opened down the road from Conrich. The competition has made us a better school more aware of issues. The public relations brochure we created with staff and parent input has been a powerful document that explains who we are and what we are about. Local real estate companies have commented on how effective it has been in helping parents make decisions about relocating to the community.

The community and staff have focussed on the implementation of computers in the school through a comprehensive technology plan. The collaboration on the plan has created the direction that the school continues to follow. Our up-to-date lab, home page on the Internet, classroom networked computers for all grades and special education reflect the dedication of the parents, partnerships and staff. Shared decision making means shared responsibilities. Our staff and parents have embraced this concept. Our students continue to develop a responsible attitude towards fellow students and their school work. We enjoy the time we have together. The road has not been without a few bumps but I believe the journey continues to be worth it.

Workshop Idea #3: Developing the Skills for Consensus

Purpose: to understand the concept of consensus
to practise consensus building
to apply the skill to SBDM.

Materials: handouts or data sheets, chart paper

Time: 12–2 hours

Introduction

- Definition of consensus — how do the participants define the term? What do we mean by the term "adequate consensus"?
- Have the participants used consensus to make a decision recently? What decision? How did it work?

Presentation

- Steps in the process of consensus decision making
- Rules for consensus
- Consensus voting and how to do it

Practise the Skill

You may use a variety of material to practise the skill. One relatively simple way is to use Handout #1, Characteristics I Value in a Colleague found on page 32 of this chapter. It is non-threatening and also allows people to do some culture building.

or

You may develop a list of budget priorities for the school or a set of belief statements about the school for a vision statement. These two options allow you to proceed through the whole set of steps in consensus.

Debrief the Activities

Some questions to use:

- What was the easiest part of the process?
- What caused difficulty?
- What is the hardest aspect of the consensus process?
- What are the necessary conditions for consensus to work?

Application to SBDM

Discuss how consensus is an important part of a SBDM model and how it is more difficult when we have a variety of stakeholders in the process. When should it be used?

Other workshops in this document refer to this process; therefore, it is a good idea to practise it on something easy first.

Plan as a group what decisions should involve consensus.

Option: Snowcarding — A Consensus Process

This process was used at Mill Creek School. See page 22, chapter 4 for details. It is usually followed by a group discussion for setting plans of action and the setting of tasks. A facilitator usually leads the process. A couple of hours should complete the snowcarding, setting plans of action and setting of tasks. In the beginning, the facilitator presents the process and goes ahead if everyone agrees.

Brainstorming

In snowcarding brainstorming, major topics of discussion are written up on flipchart paper. (These could be developed by the facilitator in consultation with the meeting planners.) Other blank flipchart paper is available. The meeting participants agree to set a time period for brainstorming (20–30 minutes). All participants are given different coloured felt markers and are encouraged to write their comments and concerns regarding the topics, and new topics, on the flipchart paper. No verbal remarks are allowed, but further written comments and suggestions may be added to the flipcharts. As the time limit approaches, the facilitator asks again and again if there are anymore ideas and suggestions that should be written (time limit could be expanded if mutually agreed upon). Is the full spectrum of the issue covered? People are encouraged to contribute as much as they are able. At some point, people will indicate that the brainstorming segment is complete.

Clustering

After the writing is completed, the suggestions are then clustered — again, nonverbally. They could be cut apart and rearranged if there is more than one area on a sheet. Similar responses on topics are placed in clusters. Once clustering is finished, on to the prioritizing.

Prioritizing

Each participant is given the same number of coloured Post-it notes. They are to place these on what they deem to be the most important concerns presented in the snowcarding process. They may place all of their notes on the same point if they want to. Again, the process proceeds nonverbally and there is an opportunity for people to change their minds if they wish throughout the time designated for this section.

Moving to Action Plans

Following the snowcarding process, the group should have a pretty clear idea about where their concerns lie and what the general consensus is regarding the priority directions to take. This process works well with people who don't work together often, who are new to a group and who vary in their ability to verbalize their concerns and ideas. The process is quite quick and efficient.

Workshop Idea #3 — Worksheet #1

Characteristics I Value in a Colleague

We have to work with others often. Below is a list of qualities or characteristics that might describe someone you work with. Read through the list and select the three most desirable or important characteristics and the three least desirable.

Each group member should take two minutes to explain their choices and reasons. After that, the group as a whole should make an attempt to arrive at group consensus on the three most important or desirable and the three least important or desirable.

It will be difficult to select the three most and least desirable dispositions, but force yourself to make the necessary adjustment.

Most important or desirable:

. ____
. ____
. ____

Least important or desirable:

. ____
. ____
. ____

________ 1. Listens carefully and communicates effectively
________ 2. Friendly and sociable
________ 3. Orderly and efficient
________ 4. Good sense of humor
________ 5. Admits errors openly and honestly
________ 6. Is creative and has new ideas
________ 7. Shows respect and consideration for others
________ 8. Uses praise frequently
________ 9. Does what you want them to
________ 10. Is willing to compromise
________ 11. Never becomes angry, stays calm and cool
________ 12. Follows rules and procedures
________ 13. Says what he or she thinks; is frank
________ 14. Honest and trustworthy
________ 15. Helpful and supportive of others
________ 16. Independent and self-reliant
________ 17. Punctual and responsible
________ 18. Strives to do his or her best

Workshop Idea #4: Developing the Skills for Conflict Resolution

Purpose: to discuss the nature and causes of conflict
to learn/practise some of the skills of conflict resolution.

Materials: worksheet #1, page 35; worksheet #2, page 36; worksheet #3, page 37

Time: 1 ½–2 hours

Introduction and Opener

- Discuss the objectives for the workshop. Check the expectations of participants.
- Participants complete the first column of Worksheet #1 page 35. Next, participants interview 12 other participants about one of the items, then fill in column 2.

Discuss the exercise.

- Did they find some common patterns? What were they?
- What was the most difficult item to complete? Why?
- What was the easiest?
- Did you discover something new?
- Was there a gender difference?

Use the activity to begin a discussion about the nature and causes of conflict.

Presentation

Discuss the principles of collaborative issue resolution:

- separate the problem from the person
- emphasize interests, not position
- reach a mutual and wise agreement
- use fair standards to evaluate the terms of the agreement.

Give some examples and solicit others.

Discuss the prerequisites for collaborative issue resolution which include:

- acknowledgment of issues to be resolved
- interdependency of participants
- level playing field
- sense of urgency

Cause of Conflict

- different perceptions
- different goals and/or methods to achieve the goal
- expectations (too much, too little)
- misunderstandings (faulty communications, false assumptions)
- resources (time, money, position, space, materials)
- opposing values
- unmet needs
- an irrational view of the other person or group

Conflict Content

Facts

- People see the same fact from distinctly different viewpoints
- People have different facts about the same event

Methods

- People disagree on how to do something

Goals

- The goals toward which people work are different

Values

- People differ in their basic values
- People have different professional beliefs

Role Pressures

- People are not comfortable or skilled in the role assigned to them

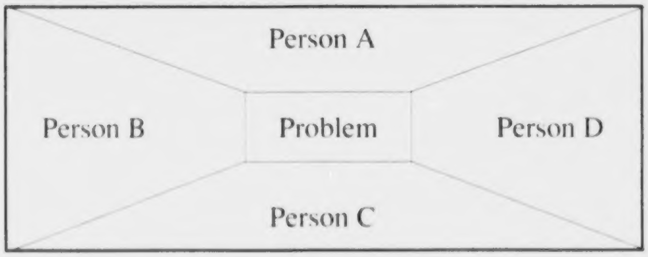
Position/Status

- Differences in power base

- skills of communication
- options to resolve the issue
- voluntary participation.

Conflict Mapping Process

- Brainstorm a possible conflict situation.
- Draw and complete a conflict map.



- For each person or group involved:
  - What's the problem?
  - What are their needs?
  - What are their fears?
  - Compare and find common elements to use in building a solution.

[This idea is adopted from *Everyone Can Win: How to Resolve Conflict*, Cornelius & Faire, 1991, pp. 117–129.]

Conflict Resolution Process

Discuss the steps in the process — Worksheet #2, page 36.

Application — Scenario Analysis

Either generate some real conflict situations or use the ones described in Worksheet #3, page 37. Analyze the scenario in terms of problem, goal, action, steps in the process of finding a solution.

Option — Role play some of the scenarios.

Planning for Future

What conflicts might arise? How will you deal with them?

Build a plan of action.

Follow-up

- Study groups with the resources listed on page 10 of this chapter
- Use the process — acknowledge the conflict the next time one occurs.

Workshop #4 — Worksheet #1
Conflict Frame of Reference Survey

The following series of open-ended statements is intended to help you discover and share your reactions to conflict and your ways of dealing with it. Complete each statement as quickly as you can (five minutes). Circulate throughout the room and get feedback from others regarding how they respond to each statement. Note their names and responses.

1. The time I felt best about dealing with conflict was when . . .

   Name:
   Response:

2. When someone disagrees with me about something important or challenges me in front of others, I usually. . .

   Name:
   Response:

3. The most important outcome of conflict is . . .

   Name:
   Response:

4. When I am involved in an interpersonal dispute, my general pattern is to . . .

   Name:
   Response:

5. I feel most vulnerable during conflict when . . .

   Name:
   Response:

6. My greatest strength in handling conflict is...

   Name:
   Response:

7. When I was growing up, conflict was . . .

   Name:
   Response:

8. When I observe staff in conflict, I tend to . . .

   Name:
   Response:

9. The quality that I value the most in dealing with conflict would be . . .

   Name:
   Response:

10. When I think about confronting someone about a possible conflict, I . . .

    Name:
    Response:

Workshop #4 — Worksheet #2
Conflict Resolution Process

Step 1 — Plan Ahead

- individual planning and reflection
- specific concerns/interests/positions
- underlying concerns
- personal needs
- establish a meeting place and time

Step 2 — Set the Stage

- set a positive tone
- adopt a problem-solving mode
- acknowledge the other person
- agree to some ground rules

Step 3 — Talk it Out

- define the problem
- understand issues from different perspectives
- deal with emotions
- identify needs and interests
- discuss assumptions, values

Step 4 — Create Solutions

- identify a range of options/alternatives
- determine advantages and disadvantages
- choose solutions that are mutually satisfactory

Step 5 — Plan for Follow-up

- agree to a future meeting

Workshop #4 — Worksheet #3
Conflict Scenario Analysis

Following are a number of situations that require decisions to be made respecting an appropriate resolution process. You are to diagnose the problem, decide on the goal of the conflict-management intervention and propose a particular course of action for handling the conflict.

- School-based budgeting now requires that decisions about how to spend financial resources be made at the school level. The staff at school have participated in budgetary decisions in the past; this was easy when there were adequate financial resources. Now the finances dictate that there is a need to reduce staff by one and a half positions (enrollment dropped). The staff is opposed to this move, but the formula determined centrally dictates it. How are decisions going to be made about who goes?
- The school council is up and running in the school and has been working quite well. The council has a parent representative who is increasingly becoming dissatisfied with a teacher whom he describes as "weak and poor." He has successfully enlisted the support of other members of the council in challenging the principal's decision to ignore their input on the matter. The president of the school council now demands that the teacher's teaching assignment be changed and wants to know what the principal is going to do about the request.
- You are the principal of the high school. A group of teachers responsible for instructing core subjects asks to meet with you to discuss a concern. They outline their distress about the number of days students who belong to sports teams are being taken from the class to attend special events and tournaments. They indicate that this practice will have a negative affect on the students come time to write diploma exams. They ask that you put an end to this practice immediately. The parents in the community value the extracurricular program.
- The school council is convinced that the future success of students at their school is dependent upon the integration of technology with the school's educational program. This means that significant resources will have to be allocated to buying computers, a network system and variety of software. In fact, the majority of the school council favors that resources be committed to this end, which means that you will not be able to hire a new teacher. It is also quite evident that the staff are in favor of additional professional support, rather than in computers. What do you do?
- A parent of a special needs student appears in your office and asks if she may have a word with you. You agree and invite her to sit down. Within minutes she becomes quite irate because the school has not provided her child with a part-time teacher assistant. She is convinced that her child will never be given a real opportunity to succeed in life and now blames you directly for this. Angry comments give way to tears and threats. How do you respond?

Workshop Idea #5: Developing a Vision Statement

Purpose:	to discuss personal visions for education to explore the environment and trends to develop a vision statement to plan for refining the statement and incorporating it into the life of the organization.
Materials:	video — Joel Barker, "The Power of Vision," chart paper, felt pens, Post-it notes
Time:	3 hours

The following plan may be used by a school jurisdiction, a school staff, a school team or a school council to create and implement a vision statement. It should be a collaborative process involving all stakeholders.

What is Vision?

Presentation of definitions for mission and vision. The use of a video such as "The Power of Vision," Joel Barker, is a good way to provide a discussion starter about the importance of vision.

Personal Beliefs

Individuals complete the following statement: "A good school is one which: ______________________________."
(List five or six characteristics)

Identification of Trends and Issues (optional)

Short discussion of current issues and trends that may have an impact on the directions the school wishes to pursue. Some examples include:

- choice and alternative models for schools
- increased parental involvement
- technology issues
- new accountability focus
- inclusion and diversity.

Compare individual lists and make a composite list of all the ideas.

Mission:

A statement of purpose.

Vision:

A description of the preferred future.

A Personal Vision of a Good School:

A community of learners.
Collegial relationships.
Encourage risk taking.
A place people choose to be.
Respect for diversity.
A place for philosophies.
Encourages humor.
High standards and low anxiety.
— Roland Barth,
Phi Delta Kappan
(March 1990)

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The Vision Writing Process (Working in small groups)

Step 1: Vision Words

- Write three words on three Post-it notes that capture your vision of what the school should become.
- Cluster similar words — note commonalities and prepare a statement for presentation.
- Present the statements to the whole group — discussion.

Step 2: Vision Images

- In the year 2000, we want our school to be thought of as . . .
- Participants use visual images to describe the school as they want it to become — presentation and discussion.

Step 3: The Statement

- Using the information generated in steps 1 and 2, propose a vision statement for the school. Compare the statements from the groups. Discuss the common aspects.

Step 4:

- A small task group is charged with writing a statement that reflects all of the common elements in the statements.

Consensus about the Vision

At a second meeting, the group uses a consensus process to arrive at the revised statement of the vision.

Perpetuating the Vision

Brainstorm ways to ensure that the vision statement is visible and plays a prominent role in the life of the school.

Closure

Participants are asked to reflect on and commit to ways that they can keep the vision alive individually and as a group.

Perpetuating the Vision:

- Newsletter
- Song/Cheer
- Art Work
- Celebrations
- School Calendar
- Handbook
- Report Cards
- Book Markers
- School Logo/Symbol
- Yearbook

Validating the Vision:

- School Goals
- Discipline Plan
- Evaluation Practices
- Student Activities
- Teaching Practices
- Instructional Program
- Professional Development

Validate existing goals:

- Review existing goals
- Has work been completed?
- Are the goals still viable?
- What has changed in the environment?
- Use the process in Step 1 on the previous page to add new goals

Workshop Idea #6: Goal Setting

Purpose: to involve all stakeholders in the process
to encourage active participation
to develop a set of goals or to validate existing goals
to begin planning based on the goals.

Materials: previous goal statements, data about the school, chart paper, pens, Post-it notes

Time: 3 hours

Describe the Current Situation (Small Groups)

- Participants complete Worksheet #1: Goal-Setting Workshop, found on page 43. This involves identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the school, school jurisdiction or school council.
- Participants may also wish to discuss current trends and issues that influence education.

Identify Goals

- Individually, on five or six Post-it notes, write phrases that suggest a focus, purpose, direction or priority.
- One at a time and silently, place the Post-it notes on a piece of chart paper. The first person puts his or her notes along the top of the paper to start a column of ideas. The next person reads what is there and adds his or her Post-it notes to the columns started, or makes new ones. Continue this activity until everyone's Post-it notes are in columns.
- Still individually and silently, read all the Post-it notes on the chart and move them within categories. Everyone should be familiar with all of the ideas that are noted.
- Discuss the columns and the ideas within them. Move the Post-it notes based on agreement of the group. Agree to the placement of the ideas.
- For each column, write at least one goal statement. Discuss goals using SMART goals description:

  Specific
  Measurable
  Achievable
  Realistic
  Time targeted

  Some goal words: coordinate, plan, design, create, organize, develop, implement, continue, promote

- Compare all the lists. Make one common list of goals.

Refine the Goals

- A small task force should then refine the wording of the goals ensuring that the ideas are clear and reflect the agreed upon focus. Ideas in the Post-it notes may contain specific strategies to use.

- Compare these goals to the goals established by the school jurisdiction, discuss any differences and make modifications.

Strategies to Achieve Goals

- Establish task teams to develop plans for each of the goals and/or work as a whole staff on a priority goal.

- Allocate time and other resources for the teams to work.

- Check with whole staff as necessary for implementation plans.

- Planning strategies are found in Workshop #7, pages 48-51.

- By Consensus – agree which goals are the most important (these will likely be on the list of each small group).

- Limit the number of goals to two or three for immediate implementation. Is there a goal that if you complete it, will also lead to achieving other goals? This question may establish the starting point.

Workshop #6 — Handout #1
Goal-setting Workshop: SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis is a process that allows us to do an in-depth environmental scan or a detailed examination of the problem or issue.

Strengths

- What is the organization good at?
- What structures and processes are in place to deal with the impacts?
- What advantages/strong points can be developed more fully? These must be clear and readily identifiable assets. Stress what is really good or useful.

Weaknesses

- What does the organization need to learn more about?
- What does it need to do better?
- What are the Achilles' heels of what we do?
- Where are we failing, powerless or in trouble?

Opportunities

- What successes could the organization hope to achieve?
- Call this the silver lining in the cloud or the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.
- Besides strengths, opportunities are the single most important reason we continue to do what we do.
- They become the future by becoming the goals for which we strive.
- They are signs of hope.

We need to identify what opportunities exist for new action that we can create or take advantage of.

Threats

- What are the major barriers that will prevent the organization from fulfiling its mission?
- What dangers or hazards out there do we need to be aware of?

It may be important that we avoid them by steering clear or developing a carefully planned assault on them.

Workshop #6 — Worksheet #1
Goal-setting Workshop: SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

Workshop #6 — Worksheet #2
Goal-setting Workshop: Goal Identification

Goal One

Goal Two

Goal Three

Goal Four

Goal Five

Goal Six

Workshop Idea #7: Developing Plans

This may be a continuation of the goal-setting workshop or a separate session. The whole group may work on one goal or teams may be organized for each goal.

Purpose:	to review the goals
	to use a variety of techniques to develop alternative strategies for achieving the goals
	to select strategies for the action plan
	to implement the plan.
Materials:	list of goals, chart paper, pens, tape
Time:	2 hours

Review the Goals

Are the goals the right ones? Are they written clearly? Form work teams to develop plans for each goal or work on a priority goal as a whole group.

Develop Alternative Strategies

Participants could use a variety of techniques including:

1. Brainstorm for ideas
2. Force field analysis (Worksheet #1, page 48)

For each goal statement, do a force field analysis. This involves brainstorming all the forces which would help you reach the goal and all the forces which would hinder you. You might consider three types of forces:

- those within people
- those among people
- external forces.

Examine the goal and the forces. Think of specific activities to strengthen helping forces and remove the hindering forces. Record them on Worksheet #3, page 50.

3. Five Why's (Worksheet #2, page 49)

This process is used as a problem identification or clarification measure. Write a clear statement of the problem ("The problem is that . . ."). Ask the question "Why is this a problem?" and answer it with a "because" statement. Then ask "Why?" of that because statement, and write a sentence "Because . . ." Continue this process five times.

Rules for Brainstorming

Set-up and Materials:
Large sheet of paper and felts. If possible, an easel per group.

Purpose:
To gather opinions and ideas. It allows for equal value to be given to all ideas, prevents domination and gives practice in listening.

Rules

- No criticism is allowed
- Free-wheeling — no limits: all ideas are listened to and accepted
- Strive for quantity — more is better
- Combine and improve ideas

Guidelines

- Clear issue to be considered
- Non-judgmental
- Visual (flip chart)
- Involvement of all group members
- Maintain momentum
- Clarity — after all are listened to
- Categorize — subgroupings
- Prioritize — may be appropriate
- Reporting — from subgroups
- Summarize — keep a record
- Variations — multi-voting
- Analyze the list
  - number the items
  - combine and renumber
  - prioritize — select 25 per cent and reduce the numbers
  - consensus on the reduced list
  - discuss, renumber
  - reprioritize
  - reduce

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Example: The problem is that the present level of skills does not always correspond with the job description.

Why is this a problem?
Because the school and central office cannot/do not always work together.

Why is this a problem?
Because central office advice is politically influenced as well.

Why is this a problem?
Because it does not provide the school with the best possible candidate.

Why is this a problem?
Because more problems are caused rather than solved.

Why is this a problem?
Because it affects the proper provision of assistance to help students.

4. Fish bone analysis (Worksheet #4, page 49)

This process can follow the "Five Why's" as an aid in action planning. Using a fishbone framework, place the problem in the head of the fish. At each of the bones, place the essence of one of the why's that could be seen as an aspect of the problem and perhaps a cause. Brainstorm for each of the bones, starting with the most promising or most important. Try to complete some ideas for each of the bones. Then select from all the activities/ideas, transfer to Worksheet #3, page 50 to prepare an action plan.

Select alternate solutions to try

1. Discussion of criteria

- What is the cost?
- How easy is it to do?
- How many people will it take?
- How soon can it be done?
- How much time will it take?
- What are my feelings about it?
- What do I predict other's feelings to be about it?
- What do I give?
- What do I get?
- What does the organization give?
- What does the organization get?
- Others?

2. Elimination of solutions and selection of solutions to try

Using the discussion criteria, decide which of the solutions are most feasible. List these solutions on the bottom of Worksheet #3, page 50.

Complete the action planning sheets

Place solutions to try on Worksheet #4, page 51 and complete making sure to indicate time, persons responsible and method of evaluation.

Implementation

Work as task teams and whole staff to perform the activities. It is important to evaluate and revise the total plan once or twice a year — possibly after a major event on the plan.

Celebrate the successes — large and small!

Workshop #7 — Worksheet #1
Goal-Setting Workshop: Force Field Analysis

Goal:

Helping Forces (For)	Hindering Forces (Against)

Workshop #7 — Worksheet #2
Goal-Setting Workshop: The Five Why's and Fish Bone Diagram

The problem is:

Caused by (why?):

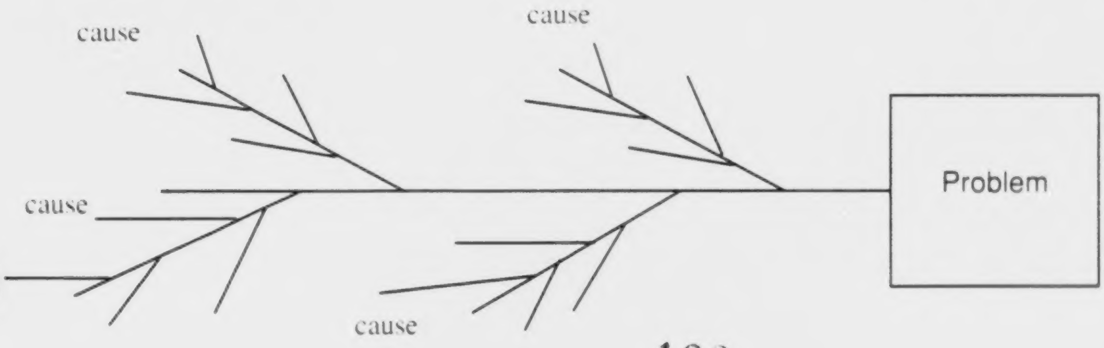
Caused by (why?):

Caused by (why?):

Caused by (why?):

Caused by (why?):

Fish Bone Diagram



Workshop #7 — Worksheet #3
Goal-Setting Workshop

List of all possible strategies or solutions:

Select the solutions to try:

Workshop #7 — Worksheet #4
Goal-Setting Workshop — Action Plan

Goal:

Strategy/ Activity	Individual Responsible	Timeline	Evaluation

Workshop Idea #8: Team Building

Purpose: to discuss characteristics of effective teams
to analyze the effectiveness of the team(s)
to analyze team structure and plan improvement.

Materials: old newspapers, chart paper, scotch tape, scissors, pens

Time: 2–3 hours

Opener Activity (Optional)

Design, create and model a T-shirt (from newspaper) that captures the spirit of the team. Roles for the team include: designer, manager, cutter, logo writer and model.

Parade and fashion commentary.

Debrief the activity by discussing:

- What factors helped the team to accomplish the goal? Hindered?
- How did the leadership develop?
- How were decisions made?
- What did this have in common with real task groups?

Characteristics of Effective Teams

Individually, think of the best team that you have belonged to. Remember what it felt like to be a member of that team. Record the name and type of team, and list the reasons for selecting this team as the best.

Make a group list of common characteristics. Discuss the lists and examine the areas that are strong characteristics of this group.

Assess Your Team

Use the high-performing team survey (Worksheet #1, page 54) or one of the many other instruments available to assess strengths and areas that need improvement for a team.

Identify Areas to Improve

Discuss the findings. Compare the analysis of individuals. What are the common aspects that could be improved? Group the factors and come to an agreement of the needs for improvement. Make plans to improve in those areas that require work. The resources listed on page 8 have suggestions that could be of assistance.

Building Blocks of Effective Teams

- Clear Objectives and Agreed Goals
- Openness and Confrontation
- Support and Trust
- Cooperation and Conflict
- Sound Procedures
- Appropriate Leadership
- Regular Review
- Individual Development
- Sound Intergroup Relations
- Have Fun!
- Celebrate Success

Analyze the School Teams With SBDM in Mind

Complete the worksheet — Analysis of Team Structures (Workshop #8, Worksheet #2, page 56). Examine all the teams that operate in the school. Plan for improvement. Try to design task or adhoc teams to accomplish specific tasks.

Worksheets #3 and #4, pages 58–59 focus on the site team in an SBDM model and may be used for analysis and planning.

Follow-up Session

- Try to include team-building activities at all meetings (page 8).
- Workshops as identified under areas to improve, previous page; e.g., conflict resolution, evaluation of process, communication skills may be planned for other professional development time.
- Study groups may be established to research and develop ways to improve the team's performance.

Workshop #8 — Worksheet #1
Team-Building Workshop: Are You a Member of a High-Performing Team?

Think carefully about your school (or department) — a team that you are most involved with.

Answer the questions below by using a seven-point scale. A score of 1 suggests that the description provided is **not at all** like the team of which you are a member. A score of 7 suggests that this is an **exact description** of the team of which you are a member.

Description of your team . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Everyone in the team has a strong sense of shared vision which informs all of our work.							
2. There are no hidden games in this team — people are straightforward, honest and direct.							
3. When a team member has an idea, everyone listens and seeks to understand the idea before evaluating it.							
4. It is always possible to ask the team for help.							
5. We keep a good record of ideas, decisions and processes.							
6. No one person dominates this team — we all feel involved.							
7. Every so often we stop working on task and look at how we are doing as a team and what we can do to improve.							
8. Each one of us has developed a learning contract both for ourselves and for our work in the team — the team fully recognizes the importance of learning investments.							
9. We know what other teams in our department are doing and we help them connect this work with ours.							
10. Though we work hard, we have fun too.							
11. We always recognize the achievements of individuals in the team and the team itself.							
12. We argue from time to time, but it is all in the spirit of getting the job done — there are no hard feelings.							
Totals							

Now add your score for the 12 items and record your score:

If you score between 65 and 84, you are a member of a team that has many excellent qualities. It would be worth looking at the scores of other team members to compare notes about areas of strength and weakness.

If you score between 40 and 64, your team has some strengths but needs to do a great deal of development work for it to become high performing.

If you score 39 or less, your team needs help from persons outside your team to aid its development.

Workshop #8 — Worksheet #2
Team-Building Workshop: Analysis of Team Structures

1. What teams operate in your school?

2. Which ones work well? Why? What do the other teams need to improve their operation?

3. How do the teams interact with one another? (Diagram the interaction.)

4. What new teams could be organized to facilitate SBDM?

5. What skills/information do team members need?

6. Plans for enhancing teams and team members?

Workshop #8 — Worksheet #3
Team-building Workshop: Defining the Structure and Membership of the Site Team

For each category, indicate the decision or solution and the supporting rationale.

Category	Decision/Solution	Rationale
Group sSize		
Group diversity		
Criteria for selecting members		
Different status of members		
Group norms		
Work setting		

Source: *A Practical Guide to Effective Site-Based Management* (1993), Larry J. Reynolds

Workshop #8 — Worksheet #4
Team-Building Workshop: Defining the Role of the Site Team

Complete the definitions for each of the following areas:

Role Defining Area	Definition and/or Description
1. Purpose	
2. Authority	
3. Steps in implementation	
4. Criteria by which school effectiveness is to be judged by the central office	
5. Expectations for site-based management held by central office	
6. Decision-making areas included in budget, staffing and program	
7. Continuing district-wide projects and programs	
8. Other advisory and decision-making groups	

Source: *A Practical Guide to Effective Site-Based Management* (1993). Larry J. Reynolds

Chapter 4

Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships

School-Based Decision Making Resource Guide: Focus on Teaching and Learning

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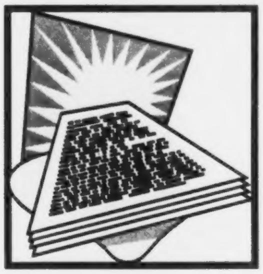
Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships



Focus Article

Tested in Alberta

Workshop Idea

Chapter Four

Introduction

This chapter again illustrates the interconnectedness of the factors within school-based decision making. McKinnon's article in Chapter Two describes new roles in Golden Hills and the descriptions of teams in Chapter Three are based on new roles and responsibilities. Gordon McIntosh's article in Chapter Five is a detailed look at the principal's role in decision making. Many of the SBDM Practices in Alberta include new role descriptions in education in general and SBDM in particular.

A brief description of the role of each of the major participants is included in the first section of this chapter. More complete descriptions of roles can be found in:

- *The School Council Resource Manual*
- *Partners in Learning*
- *Roles and Responsibilities in Education: A Position Paper*, December 1994
- *Meeting the Challenge: Detailed Three-Year Plan for Education in Alberta.*

Sample roles from the literature and from several jurisdictions' SBDM manuals are included and the workshop idea will assist groups in developing new role descriptions.

Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships in a Changing School System

Deciding on roles and responsibilities is a major step in the shared decision-making process. People cannot be expected to maintain past roles and responsibilities in a system that calls for a change in beliefs and principles of how schools and school systems operate. In a hierarchical system, a line-and-staff diagram serves to illustrate the lines of command. The authority and the responsibility of an individual were functions of position and not necessarily a function of knowledge and leadership.

Shared decision making requires a shift in thinking. Shared decision making calls for decisions to be made in close proximity to the implementation site of those decisions with input from those who are affected by the decisions or those who will have to implement them. With this shift in thinking comes a necessary shift in roles and responsibilities. As roles of the educational partners change, so will the relationships between and among the stakeholder groups.

Shared decision making calls for a new kind of leadership and evolving roles for all partners in the educational process. Shared decision making and the concept of site-based management requires that central offices and boards adopt more supportive roles and shift much of their authority for decision making to the school level. The boards must still set parameters with the people who are affected by the decisions represented in this process. Ongoing communication and dialogue among the participants is essential in the process of establishing new roles.

Core Business of Alberta Education

Alberta Education carries out the provincial government's constitutional responsibility for education under the direction of the Minister. The department has four core functions:

- to set and communicate high standards, focusing on what students need to learn
- to assess and report to government and the public on student achievement, and the performance and cost of the education system
- to provide funding to school authorities on a fair and equitable basis and control the cost of education
- to develop and implement legislation, policies and long-range plans for the education system.

Role of Students

The voice that is most often silent in the dialogue about school improvement is that of the students. Recent educational researchers have supported the position that if we are ultimately concerned about students' learning and opportunities, we must include students' accounts of their school experience as part of the agenda for school improvement.

In *Rethinking Educational Change with Heart and Mind* (1997) edited by Andy Hargreaves, the chapter "Students' Perspectives on School Improvement" by Jean Rudduck, Julia Day and Gwen Wallace presents a survey of the research that supports the need to listen to the student perspective if we are to significantly enhance student progress, achievement and development.

According to the research of Rudduck, Day and Wallace based on student interviews we can improve schools by:

- giving each year of secondary schooling a distinct identity
- creating time for dialogue about learning
- helping students explore standards for judging quality work
- making time for teachers to talk individually with students
- starting "futures" counseling in small groups
- helping students understand what "working harder" means in different subjects
- strengthening the procedures and practice relating to homework
- responding to the problem of "catching up" for students who miss work
- helping students manage multiple demands
- formalizing opportunities for students to support one another in learning
- offering noon-hour or after-school clinics.

Ways to involve students in decisions about how to improve learning and teaching:

- have students on school councils and on-site teams at the school level
- empower student councils to make decisions
- involve students as participants in focus groups on important issues
- through classroom dialogue
- through surveys and questionnaires.

Six principles fundamental to students' commitment to learning, to their confidence as learners and to their image of themselves as learners.

1. *The principle of respect for students as individuals and as a body occupying a significant position in the school.*
2. *The principle of fairness to all students irrespective of their class, gender, ethnicity or academic status.*
3. *The principle of autonomy (not as an absolute state but as both a right and a responsibility in relation to physical and social maturity).*
4. *The principle of intellectual challenge that helps students to experience learning as a dynamic, engaging and empowering activity.*
5. *The principle of social support in relation to both academic and emotional concerns.*
6. *The principle of security in relation to both the physical setting of the school and in interpersonal relations and encounters (including anxiety about threats to students' self-esteem.)*

— Ruddick, Day & Wallace,
"Student Perspectives on School Improvement"
(1997)

— Andy Hargreaves, editor,
Rethinking Educational Change with Heart and Mind
"Student Perspectives on School Improvement"
(1997)

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Teachers most likely to increase commitment to learning are those who:

- *enjoy teaching the subject*
- *enjoy teaching the students*
- *make lesson interesting and linked to life outside school*
- *will have a laugh but know how to keep order*
- *are fair*
- *are easy for students to talk to*
- *don't shout*
- *don't go on about things*
- *explain things students don't understand without making them feel small*
- *don't give up on students*

— Ruddick, Day & Wallace, "*Student Perspectives on School Improvement*" (1997)

— Andy Hargreaves, editor, *Rethinking Educational Change with Heart and Mind* "*Student Perspectives on School Improvement*" (1997)

Alberta Association of Students' Councils and Advisors

The Alberta Association of Students' Councils and Advisors (AASCA) has been in existence for eight years and is comprised of schools from across the province who work with and for students to promote student leadership. The five aims of AASCA are:

- to provide leadership experiences for students and student advisors
- to present practical information and ideas on planning, organizing, managing and supervising student activities
- to develop a spirit of sharing and cooperation as it pertains to the operation of students' councils and cocurricular activities in secondary schools
- to facilitate a forum for the exchange of ideas among students and student advisors
- to motivate students to be involved in leadership.

To attain these aims, an annual student leadership conference is held that is intended to motivate, energize and unite student leaders and advisors from across Alberta.

The 1997–98 executive board for AASCA comprises the following people:

Pam Davidson, President, Cochrane High School
Nicole Bondarchuk, Past President, Lorne Jenken High
Pat Beingessner, First Vice President, Springbank High
Karen David, Second Vice, Ponoka Composite
Louise Osland, Secretary, Jasper Place High
Belinda Kotyshyn, Treasurer, Salisbury Composite High
Trish Randolph-Beaver, Communications, Mistassiny School

Please feel free to contact anyone on the executive for more information or support.

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Role of School Boards and Central Office Personnel

The school board, with the support of central office, must create an environment supportive of school-based decision making. They must adopt enabling roles which allow schools to implement systematic school improvements. From the current literature, 13 essential interdependent and overlapping roles have been identified (Fred H. Wood, 1996).

- Develop a district long-range plan which serves as a context for individual school improvement plans. This long-range plan needs to be developed collaboratively with all the stakeholders represented. This plan must articulate or establish the mission and vision of the system in terms of decentralization and shared decision making. The board, through its statements and policies, publicly demonstrates its commitment to shared decision making at the school level.
- Identify at least one systematic, research-based process that schools will use to plan and implement school improvement.
- Establish district policies and procedures that support school-based decision making and school improvement. These policies and procedures need to recognize the differences between and among schools within the district. Not all schools will look the same in the style of school governance, staff and parent involvement and student demographics.
- Establish a framework for curriculum and instruction in the district. The framework would identify student performance standards and goals.
- Establish a staff development program to assist school planning teams. Teams of central office staff and principals plan and implement decentralized change and school improvement. District-level units are formed to help schools achieve their school improvement goals. The team is also responsible for the planning and provision of district inservice that is needed to implement the district changes.
- Prepare the school board for, and obtain its support of, school-based improvement. The board must be educated in shared decision making and its new role.
- Model desired behaviours for improvement within central office. The central office must have an improvement plan as well as a professional development plan.

Board Members and Central Office Personnel:

- communicate consistent expectations
- eliminate district barriers.
- provide a rationale for improvement
- assist new teachers
- assist in the school-improvement process
- establish a district vision
- model improvement in central office
- be public advocates for shared decision making
- support school-based decision making with policy
- provide time and resources.
- report district progress on a regular basis.

The board of trustees believes that shared decision making will result in a strong educational program for students by ensuring that all decisions are made for the good of the students.

Medicine Hat
School District

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Foothills School Division — Board Commitments

The work of the board of trustees will be characterized by *thinking* and *acting* in ways which will embrace being *realistic, adaptable, optimistic, responsive, accountable and clearly focused on the future.*

The board sees itself having five primary areas of responsibility:

$ The board is committed to be an ambassador for student learning in Foothills School Division by speaking with an informed voice and advocating for public education within the greater community.

$ The board's leadership facilitates the setting of a clear sense of vision based on basic community values, beliefs and expectations. The goals, plans and policies of the board will enable others to meet this purpose.

$ The board will meet its responsibility of legislative policy and decision making through dialogue with its external and internal publics.

$ The board will support innovation and change through policy development, resource allocation, building relationships and sustaining initiatives.

$ The board will be publicly accountable by ensuring appropriate systems of evaluation and assessment lead to continuous improvement.

- Establish expectations that support implementation of school-based improvement:
  - each school will have a plan for school improvement
  - all stakeholders will be involved in the plan development
  - the principal will be responsible and accountable for the leadership of the school
  - there will be active participation.
- Serve as public advocates for school-based improvement, shared decision making, decentralization and school-based budgeting.
- Establish communications and action networks between and among central office, schools and communities that keep stakeholders informed about implementation and the results of school improvement.
- Provide and manage district resources to support school improvement plans.
- Monitor and evaluate the district's improvement programs:
  - how to keep track of school improvement?
  - how to monitor the process?
  - how to evaluate the process and results of school improvement?
- Serve as facilitators and support for school-based decision making. The board, through central office staff, acts as a facilitator, a helper and a mediator to provide technical assistance and information upon which schools can make good decisions.

Role of the Superintendent

This role description is based on findings from *An Examination of Superintendent Behaviors Related to School-Based Change*, Doctoral Dissertation, Elizabeth A. Ennis, 1996.

With the Board of Trustees:

- Create an organizational structure to promote school-based planning and authority.
- Develop parameters for school-based decisions which promote school change.
- Clarify the extent to which board members are comfortable with schools becoming different due to individual school-based change programs.
- Revise district policies if necessary to support school-based change decisions.

With School Stakeholders:

- Provide resources for staff development to support school-based change goals.
- Involve principals in district-wide decisions that have influence on school-level decision making.
- Achieve direct communication between principals and superintendents.
- Encourage school district problem-solving through long-range planning over quick-fix solutions as a way of solving school district problems.
- Inform all school stakeholders about the district's values and priorities concerning school-based change.
- Monitor the progress of school change efforts.

With Central Office:

- Communicate to the central office staff the district's values and priorities about school-based change and shared decision making.
- Align district-level human and fiscal resources with school-based change efforts.
- Model shared decision making for central office staff.
- Demonstrate commitment to school-based change and shared decision making by discussing related issues at district level meetings.

Facilitator Behaviour

- provide data and information
- lead in a school improvement plan
- provide training for staff, students and parents in implementation, maintenance and evaluation of improvement strategies
- be a participating member
- assist in gathering data
- serve as a resource person
- obtain resources for planning, training and implementation
- obtain policy or procedure waivers
- assist the planning team in communication
- help to plan, deliver or manage inservice that focuses on school goals
- assist the staff with monitoring and evaluating inservice
- eliminate barriers to success
- communicate expectations
- participate in school-based professional development
- model those behaviours that the staff, students and parents are expected to model

Role of School-Based Administrators

Chapter 5 contains a detailed description of the principal's role in the school.

The principal has been identified as a key figure in the implementation of school-based decision making. The principal has a great influence in shaping the school culture and the promotion of trust and commitment among school staff. If the principal feels threatened by the current changes, it is almost certain that shared decision making will be implemented in name only, thus increasing the level of mistrust of other partners in the process. The authority issues in the implementation of school-based decision making are so personal that it would be impossible for a principal who does not believe in it (but who will follow the mandate of the board) to expect genuine implementation of shared decision making to occur. Motivating others while trying to hold onto the past authority structures with no commitment to a new order is impossible.

Principals should be involved in all decision making that affects the school. The task that faces the school-based administrator in the site-based, shared decision-making model is how to involve others in the decision making. The principal is the link between the staff, the parents, the community and the central office.

The SBDM philosophy dictates that school-based administrations have increased autonomy in decision making.
Rocky View School Division

The basic reason for shared decision making is to improve the instructional program and thereby enhance student achievement. The benefits of shared decision making are characterized by commitment, involvement, empowerment, creative solutions and opportunities for risk taking. If shared decision making is to be successful as a way to operationalize school-based decision making for the purpose of improvement of student learning, then school administrators must commit to certain principles:

- Staff, parents, students and community members can be trusted to make appropriate decisions.
- Those individuals who are responsible for implementation should participate in the decision.
- Those closest to the implementation make better decisions.
- The principal's role is supportive and facilitative in addition to being responsible for the development of school policies and resolutions.

The behaviours exhibited by the principal in shared decision making are not unlike those of central office staff, in that the principal must take the role of the facilitator and develop leadership skills in others.

Gary McKinnon's article (Chapter Two, pp. 2–20) quotes Guskey and Peterson in describing the principal as a leader of leaders. The example of Elizabeth Barrett School (Chapter Three, p. 24) illustrates a collaborative role for the administration.

The principal should have a balanced perspective of both the management and leadership roles, making decisions that are grounded in a shared vision and agreed upon goals.

Role of School Staff

The term school staff means the whole staff, teachers and all the support staff. The role of the staff is to take an active role in making decisions at the school which will have an impact on teaching and learning.

Schools staffs cannot lose sight of the fact that the purpose of SBDM and shared decision making is the improvement of teaching and learning. To this end, all staff must be involved in developing a school education plan based on three concepts:

- principles of learning — these are developed from sound knowledge of how students learn best
- shared governance — this consists of the process developed by the school community to determine how decisions are made in the school
- critical study process (action research) — if the purpose of shared decision making is the improvement of teaching and learning, then a process must be established which will determine if this has taken place. Based on the collected data, future decisions can be made regarding instructional strategies.

School staff, with the school council and community stakeholders, must develop collaboratively a decision-making framework. They need to work together to decide how decisions are made, who will make them and who decides which group, team or committee (site team or steering team) these decisions and issues will be referred to for resolution. This steering team or site team, whose task it is to decide which team and process to use, needs to be representative of the school community. The rules by which decisions are to be made must be understood and accepted by all staff members.

Teachers, through shared decision making, are able to reframe the culture of the school, focusing on instruction, collaboration and learning. Where teachers have professional conversations and work together on planning and making teaching materials, there is a greater focus on the school improvement goals.

Teacher involvement in SBDM requires:

- a focus for SBDM on specific teaching and learning activities of interest to teachers
- professional development activities that focus on SBDM
- time through the use of substitutes or team work to share responsibilities
- trust and support by colleagues
- real decision-making authority.

Chapter Six, pages 8–10 also refers to the teachers' role in SBDM.

Teachers, as professionals, want their experience to be valued and used, and they are in a position to make informed decisions and to provide critical insights into the teaching/learning process.

— Midgely & Wood,
"Beyond Site Based
Management: Empowering
Teachers," *Phi Delta
Kappan* (1993)

School staffs need to focus on teaching and learning and making decisions which will lead them to the school's improvement goals. In order to do this, staffs need to move from fragmented individualism through congenial schools to collegial schools exhibiting a collaborative work culture with a focus on professionalism.

— Michael Fullan, Address to
National Staff Development
Council Conference,
Vancouver, December 1996

Role of Support Staff

SBDM has added new dimensions to the role of the support staff in schools. In schools like Athabasca River School in Cold Lake, support staff are represented on the school council.

In many schools, all staff members are involved in professional development activities related to SBDM, including critical activities such as developing mission/vision statements, writing school educational goals and developing school educational plans.

In Grasslands School Division, Linda Nielson, a support staff member of Central Elementary School, was a member of a jurisdiction committee that developed their SBDM policy and manual. Linda says, "One thing that has worked well is the increase in communication. There is more follow up and goals are followed. There is more accountability with administration and staff. However, it still seems that when goals and mission statements are set up teachers have more say when it should be all staff. We need to remember that there are more than teachers involved. We must be open to change and communicate our needs. People need to get involved in order to see that change can happen because people don't really believe that change can happen."

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Effects of Site-Based Management on School Support Staff

Elaine Aronyk, Support Staff

I have been an employee of the Parkland School Division No. 70 for eight years. Presently I work as a half-time teacher assistant and half-time school secretary at High Park School in Stony Plain.

I believe that site-based management on the whole has been a benefit to our school. It has made all staff, students and parents aware of the need to plan for the future. It also lets them make choices about where the money for our school is being spent.

The changes to my position since site-based management was introduced have been positive. In my role as teacher assistant, I feel that my input to our yearly education plan is always considered and any staff member is welcome to be a part of the education and budget committees (I am a member of both). In my role as secretary, it has increased the workload to some extent—preparing documentation for the yearly plan, assisting in the development of our budget and tracking the expenses for our school.

At High Park, developing our education plan each year is a full staff activity. We meet early in the year to set goals and expenditures for the upcoming year. The recommendations from all staff members are drafted into a plan by a smaller committee and then brought back to full staff for their revisions, further recommendations and final approval. The plan is also approved by the school council of our school enabling them to provide input from their point of view.

One of the drawbacks of this type of individual school decision-making program is that it takes too much student/staff contact time away from the principal, who must now also wear the hat of business manager for the school. To improve this situation, I would recommend that each school division set aside funds for each school to hire a full or part-time business manager depending on the enrollment of the school. I feel in some cases, we, as a division are losing some of our effective and caring principals because business management is not the career path they chose.

Teachers and the Transition to SBDM

Kathleen Rodriguez, Rocky Elementary School, Rocky Mountain House

Site-based decision making is becoming a wonderful way of decision making in our school. But the transition from board-based to site-based decision making has not been entirely smooth.

Many of our teachers were filled with apprehension when we first heard about this way of running a school. Was this going to be a way for principals to download some of their work to us? Would we be given more responsibility for decisions for which we should not be responsible? Should we have to decide where money would be spent? Would we need business degrees or some sort of business training? Should our leaders be teachers or business administrators? If our leaders were going to be business administrators, would they understand our needs and our students? Would we be taken away from our responsibility of teaching children? Given the meetings that were perceived as necessary, time would be a big factor and it seemed that our jobs would further consume our lives. Issues of territoriality, segregation of administrators, hanging on to the past, and worrying about the unknown were some of our biggest fears.

Site-based decision making was discussed for about two years before it was implemented. By this time, some staff members were becoming a little comfortable with the new framework. Three years ago, we established a financial committee and began to spend time at staff meetings discussing what we wanted in terms of site-based decision making. These large group discussions led to smaller group discussions on the same topics over recess breaks, spares and during lunch hours. Gradually, we began to see new possibilities. We began to view the school in a different light. Teachers felt more ownership, as they worked with each other to make school programs successful. The classroom began to be seen more as part of the whole school and there was renewed dedication towards building a strong school. At the same time, given new methods of purchasing supplies, teachers began to order and use materials that supported their personal teaching styles, thus helping to build even more successful learning environments. The school began to develop its own uniqueness.

At present, there is a sense that leadership from our administrators has become a partnership. As well, teaching staff are beginning to view the school board in a more favourable light. A greater sense of trust and cooperation is building.

Rocky Elementary School, Rocky Mountain House, in the Wild Rose School Division, has 410 students Grades 1–6.

Teacher Collaboration and Staff Development are Essential

After completing our research, we concluded that the most essential ingredient of a successful school—the one that holds it all together—is best described by the simple word "connection." An effective school connects people, to create community. An effective school connects the curriculum, to achieve coherence. An effective school connects classrooms and resources, to enrich the learning climate. An effective school connects learning to life, to build character.

— Ernest Boyer, *The Basic School: A Community for Learning*, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1995)

Few teachers would be in favor of a return to the old days of board-based decision making. Teachers are happy to be making the decisions on site that affect their students and the community. This does not mean that site-based decision making has been easy. Yes, more meetings were initially required. Coming to decisions on a large staff can be difficult at times. There were some staff members who felt fearful of the changes, and some still find that fear surfacing at times. Change does not come easily to everyone.

Site-based decision making has been successful at our school partly because we had time to think and talk about it before actually experiencing it. It has been successful because our staff was willing to devote extra time and support to this new framework. But is has been successful mostly because our administrative team has joined with us in exploring possibilities and implementing them, rather than dictating them to us.

Role of Parents

To attempt to educate students without developing a deep partnership among parents, students and teachers is hopeless. Everyone involved in the education of students needs to build on the capacity of the partnership. This partnership may at first be uncomfortable and distrustful, but within the distrust and discomfort comes the realization that, without the strong collaboration of parents and staff, the instructional goals of the school will not be met.

Parents and teachers need to review their roles in terms of their involvement in the child's education. Involvement does not necessarily mean that the parents must volunteer in their child's school on a regular basis — there are other ways to become involved beyond volunteering.

This resource guide does not go into any detail about this aspect of the role; however, The Alberta Teachers' Association's manual, *Partners in Learning*, documents many current practices and ideas for involving parents, teachers and students in working to enhance learning.

Parents, however, may also have a role in the governance of schools both as an individual member of a school team and as a member of a school council. Examples of this role are found in the description of East Brook School, Chapter Three, page 20.

The description of the decision-making process at Duchess School, Brooks, Chapter Five, page 38, shows parent representation on each of the decision-making teams in the school.

Role of School Councils

Schools need to make connections with parents and the larger community as they focus on enhancing teaching and learning. School council members, as partners in the educational system, can become staunch supporters of school education goals if they are included in the development of the goals. School councils become an advocate for public education and for the school in particular. When school councils are involved in goal setting and solving issues at the school, many changes can take place.

Section 17 of the *School Act* recognizes the rights of parents and the school community to have meaningful involvement in the education of their children through school councils. School councils are responsible to the parents and the community they serve.

17(4) A school council may, at its discretion

(a) advise the principal and the board respecting any matter relating to the school

(b) perform any duty or function delegated to it by the board in accordance with the delegation

(c) consult with the principal so that the principal may ensure that students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister

(d) consult with the principal so that the principal may ensure that the fiscal management of the school is in accordance with the requirements of the board and the superintendent

(e) do anything it is required to do under the regulations.

Alberta Education recognizes the right of parents to be involved in their children's education, and for parents, community members and school staff to be involved in key decisions about the education of students. In each school operated by a board, parents and the school community must be provided with the opportunity to establish a school council. School councils, at their discretion, may have a role in advising and consulting with the principal on any matter relating to the school.

The *School Council Resource Manual* provides a detailed analysis of the roles and responsibilities of the school council.

School councils play an important role by providing advice, consultation and assistance to school principals and trustees regarding educational issues.

School board policy and procedures for school-based decision making shall:

- encourage input from all staff, parents and the community into school-based decisions on programs, instructional services, extra curricular activities and the allocation of funds to support them
- define procedures for wide spread communications and information sharing among stakeholders, including appropriate involvement in school-based planning, evaluation and reporting processes.

From Alberta Education
Policy, January 1997

Involvement by school councils may include:

- helping to ensure that students have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister of Education
- providing input on various matters such as program planning and school budgets, policies and operations
- serving as liaison among parents, the school and community groups
- locating resources such as speakers and volunteers
- gathering information and sharing experiences
- supporting the goals and objectives of the school.

Every member of a school council has an important role. As a group, the council's goal is to form a working partnership with the school. The principal continues to be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school. Principals and the board of trustees have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all decisions are in the best educational interest of students in the school.

The principal and school staff are obligated to receive the council's advice, consider it fully and act on it if possible. The school council has discretionary authority to advise on (if it so wishes) educational standards, program planning, school budgets, policies and operations.

School councils provide parents, students (in senior high school) and community members with an opportunity to work closely with teachers and administrators to ensure that students receive the best possible education.

Adapted from Alberta Education
Policy "Education Programs
and Services, School Councils"
Policy 1.8.3
January 9, 1996

Message From a School Council Chair

Lori Barclay, Banded Peak School,
Rockyview School Division No. 41

You know, you learn something new every day. For me, it was discovering what school-based decision making was all about. I had alway been under the assumption that school councils have been around forever (some of us remember the Harper Valley PTA, one of the more famous parent/teacher associations!). Six years ago, I had the pleasure of sitting on the board of directors for Bragg Creek ECS. At the time, I assumed that type of parent/school liaison existed for all educational institutions. And I suppose in some communities, and under a variety of titles, parent/community input has always been passed on to the school. However, not until our present provincial government started changing educational budget, was there such a public outcry for greater involvement in how schools allocated their funds — what schools were responsible for and for what parents were willing to fundraise.

From this situation, emerged our present system of school councils. It is interesting to note that this year, for the first time, school councils have more authority and responsibility than ever before. And since we voted to join the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association, we are part of a group that has its own lobby to the provincial legislature as well as direct access to the Minister of Education.

It should be made clear that school councils still operate on a collegial and collaborative level with the principal and staff of the school. According to the *School Council Resource Manual* (Alberta Education) which is produced jointly by the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association, the Alberta Teachers' Association and Alberta Education, school councils may now choose to become involved in decisions that set direction for the school — establishing a mission statement, a vision statement, guiding principles and objectives, and while the school principal has the primary decision-making responsibility he is expected to base decisions on consultation with the school community and is accountable for seeing decisions meet community expectations. With these changes, school councils become partnerships where the entire school community joins to establish and work toward common goals with the single aim of improving student learning. School councils are designed to give each child the support and encouragement of the entire community. I guess it really does take an entire village to raise a child!

The purpose of the school council is to provide the structure through which all stakeholders come together to talk about the education of that community's children.

Although school councils have to avoid overstepping the limits of their assignments or expertise, there is still a large role that can be played. What process do we need to observe to accomplish our goals? Collaboration, consultation and dialogue have proven to achieve the best outcomes in the shortest amount of time.

To collaborate means to acknowledge our common goal of providing all children in our community with the best education possible and to work jointly toward achieving it. Consultation involves one person meeting with another for the purpose of obtaining an opinion, information or advice. In the case of school councils, each group represented on council is expected to operate in consultation with the others. A main purpose of the school councils is to share views and information — a mutual consultation process. Dialogue describes the nature of discussion that best meets the needs of school councils. Dialogue is based on the principle that conception and implementation are intimately linked with a core of common meaning. During the dialogue process, people learn how to think together in the sense of occupying a collective sensibility in which the thoughts, emotions and resulting actions belong not to one individual, but to all of them together.

We have an elected executive committee and officers whose function it is to make long-range plans for school council consideration by collecting and reviewing information provided by its various committees, and then making recommendations to the school council after consulting with the principal and staff of the school. However, it is still expected that there be parental and community input at all levels and stages.

To this end, our strategic planning school council will hold a workshop designed to assist large groups to arrive at consensus involving mission and vision statements. It seems appropriate that this mission-setting meeting will be taking place in the new school! The ideas that are generated from this meeting will be used by the staff and administration of Banded Peak School in the process of formulating a powerful statement about the future of our school. This statement will be used regularly by all members as the basis for understanding and prioritizing their work. So you can see why this is such an important meeting. After all: VISION without action is called dreaming. ACTION without vision is called passing time. VISION with ACTION can change the world (Joel Barker, from the video *Power of Vision*).

Note: This article was found on the Internet, and reprinted here courtesy of Ms. Barclay.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: School Council — The School's Team

Athabasca School, Northern Lights School Division No. 69

Walter Hrycauk, Principal, and
Tom Allmendinger, School Council Chair

All council members have a keen interest in the school's operation and doing what is right for children. We meet once a month or as required if emergent items surface. Agenda are prepared by the school council chair in conjunction with the principal. The agenda and information relative to the meeting are usually provided to council members prior to the meeting date in order for things to proceed more smoothly and save time. Issues are discussed and debated, if necessary, until consensus is reached. Although this may take more time initially, it generally saves time down the road. By providing information and involving all stakeholders in the decision-making process, there is far less chance of issues being brought back to the table for discussion at a later date by unsatisfied members. Once a decision is made, it is expected that there will be support for the decision by all stakeholders.

We have a school council consisting of the principal and nine members: five parents — all fathers — two teachers, one paraprofessional staff member and one community representative appointed by the council.

Principal Hrycauk indicates that the advantages of school councils include:

- More involvement of all stakeholders — School councils consist of a representation by all stakeholders in the school community. This allows for more involvement of parents, teachers, secretaries, librarians, teacher assistants, custodians and students in the decision-making process. By involving stakeholders, one can achieve a much more global perspective. Also, all factors are generally considered and discussed by all stakeholders prior to decisions being finalized.

- More commitment by all staff — As people become more involved, they become more committed to what they are doing. People who are involved in decision-making work hard to achieve the goals they have set for the students and school. They will also support the decisions they make and are prepared to justify them to all stakeholders.

- More accountability — With more involvement and commitment comes more accountability. If the school council and all stakeholders are kept informed and have input into all decisions affecting the school, they are prepared to assume responsibility for those decisions. Even though principals are ultimately accountable for all aspects of school operations and programming, they can rest assured that they have the support of their staff, students and parents.

- Team approach to decision making — The school council organization lends itself to team decision making. Each member of the team is important, not only as an individual, but to the group as a whole. Each member also realizes that he or she is a voice for a certain group of people that he or she represents. It is the duty of members to bring issues to their attention and solicit their input. Within the council, members realize that the group will listen and respect their thoughts and feelings. The council should strive to achieve consensus on all decisions. Once consensus is reached, all members are confident that their decisions have the support of all stakeholders. It is also important to note that operating your council in this manner prevents factions from developing within your school.

- Ambassadors for the school — The school council representatives will probably be your most important ambassadors for the school. The parents who sit on council speak to other parents in the community about the school's positive aspects. Staff members are more informed and as a result, are more supportive and understanding of each other. This creates less stress in the working environment and makes schools a more exciting place to work and visit. This also creates the best possible learning environment for students — a supportive environment with staff and parents working together.

- Reduced stress in the working environment — We all know how stressful the job of an educator can be. By involving stakeholders in the decision-making process, teachers are more informed on issues that affect them personally. This awareness helps reduce stress in the workplace. When stakeholders are aware of the issues and have had input into the decisions made at council level, there is far less chance of debates in the parking lot following the meeting. Also, with more people working toward common goals for students, the workload is shared and the potential benefits to students and staff are increasing.

- Better decisions — When working with the philosophy that all stakeholders in the decision-making process are involved, it is my experience that better decisions are forthcoming. I attribute this to a more global awareness of the issues by those involved in the process. The support for the decisions is achieved as a result of the involvement of stakeholders in the process. When people have a voice in the decisions affecting their students, schools and jobs, and believe that their voice is valued, they support the decision whole-heartedly.

Tom Allmendinger, chair of the school council, notes that the school council has changed its role. Before, school council was simply a fund-raiser. Now, the school council is heavily involved in the business of the school. We are involved in the budget process, interviewing staff, planning the school calendar, timetable, supervision schedule . . . lot of hands-on work, he says.

There has been a lot of opportunities for involvement not only on the council but also on task forces such as discipline, three-year plan and dress codes. We are now seeing the results of last year's work.

Everything this year has worked well. There has been high involvement. However, last year we had to deal with a teacher transfer and parents used the council as a forum to have the teacher remain. But this year has been quiet on that front.

What will be the role of school councils in the future?

As we move into the 21st century, we believe we will see school councils performing the following role in our schools:

— setting school mission and value statements

— setting school goals and approving school plans

— ensuring that school goals drive the budget

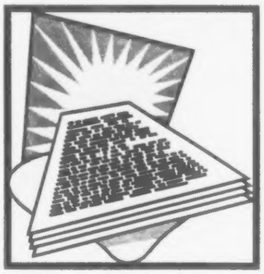
— setting school-based policies

— reviewing and revising school programs to meet the needs of students and community

— ensuring stakeholders have a voice in the decisions affecting students, staff and the school

— creating an environment that is open, friendly and free of stress

— surveying parents, students and staff to determine level of satisfaction with school programs.



SBDM Practices In Alberta: Mill Creek School, Edmonton School District No. 7

Louise Jansen, Parent, and
Edgar Schmidt, Principal

What We Did in Our School

In the fall of 1996, Mill Creek school council, established for merely a year and working for the first time with a new principal, was faced with the looming possibility of school closure. Student numbers had dwindled to the 60s in a school which held the potential of an enrollment of 400 students. The school council was prepared to take action. Mill Creek school council dealt with the serious issue of declining school enrollment through the following stages:

- September 1996: At the fall establishment meeting for the school council, the issue of possible school closure was discussed.
- October 1996: School council met with the school district representative from monitoring and planning and was advised of the possible options for Mill Creek.
- October 1996: School council met for a special planning session with the purpose: "to compile ideas for future programming at Mill Creek School." With our backs to the wall, an engaging and democratic process was needed to easily facilitate the generation of ideas which would bring in more students. As well, a consensus was greatly desired so that action plans could be developed and quick steps taken.
- November 1996: School council held an information session with representatives from two long-standing alternative elementary programs offered within the district. Following the session, school council representatives visited each of the schools and gathered first-hand information regarding the alternative program and its impact on the regular school program.
- November 1996: School council met to brainstorm further actions regarding alternatives for Mill Creek Elementary. The principal reported on his meeting (that day) with the superintendent, describing the actions to date. He received reassurance that the school was not faced with imminent closure. Parent reps who had visited alternative program schools reported on their observations. It was decided to survey parents.
- December 1996: The principal circulated a questionnaire to parents that assessed their support for current programs at the school and their interest in alternative programs at Mill Creek.

- January 1997: The results of the survey were circulated. The committee reported to school council. An alternative program, already approved by the district school board, was identified and proposed to school council. The advantages of the alternative program were assessed. Recommendations were offered by the committee to the school council. School council came to a consensus to pursue the Traditional Community Alternative Program for Mill Creek.
- The principal drafted a mission statement, principles of operation and frequently asked questions for the alternative program for feedback from school council members. A draft brochure advertising the program was developed and circulated.
- January 1997: Prior to the general meeting to formally ratify support for the alternative program, school council met again to review the program ideas of the alternative program.
- February 1997: At a general meeting of the Mill Creek school council, the request for the designation of the traditional community alternative program was formally supported by consensus.
- Since the formal designation, school council has established a committee to promote the alternative program. Already parents are bringing children to inquire about fall registration with Mill Creek. District level promotional material lists the alternative program at Mill Creek.

Benefits of the Process

The six-month process which led to the formal designation of the alternative program by Mill Creek Elementary was characterized by overall intense interest on the part of school council members to come up with a plan which would increase student enrollment and avoid school closure.

Because the council demonstrated willingness to seriously consider a whole range of ideas and encouraged all members to openly express their ideas and concerns, group process was greatly enhanced. All council members became dedicated to successfully resolving the problem and high-level analysis and decision making took place. The principal offered leadership and took initiative in consulting with the school district officials, in inviting speakers from other alternative programs, in seeking information regarding other alternative programs through the Internet, in consulting with a principal launching a similar program in another elementary school, in developing and analyzing the survey and in fleshing out the program aspects. Because of the open, accepting and engaging dialogue which characterized the series of school council meetings, the principal felt supported and grounded in the proposals he presented to the school district. Parents felt that their suggestions and concerns were expressed and considered. Teachers felt represented through their elected council member and were consulted through staff meetings throughout the process.

In the initial stages in fall of 1996, school council focused on a set of divergent questions regarding the problem of decreased enrollment. The brainstorming session utilizing the nonverbal technique called snowcarding (see Chapter Three, page 30) offered parents, teachers and the school principal the opportunity to write up all their suggestions and concerns on an identified array of topics.

If We Did it Again, What Would We Do Differently?

The snowcarding process democratized the process of brainstorming which often can be dominated by persons in the group who are articulate. Mill Creek could not afford, at this crucial time, to have disaffected council members who felt their concerns weren't voiced and felt shut out. Everyone's support was essential. In a small school, dissent could have meant disaster to the tenuous process of resolving the complex problem of dwindling enrollment.

With one path taken to resolve the issue of declining enrollment at Mill Creek, other questions have arisen and also need attention from school council. Aspects of these deal with the dramatic changes taking place at the provincial level in Alberta; others deal with particular policies in place in this school district. Issues identified are:

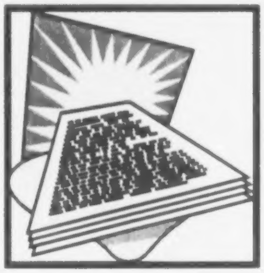
- Provincially:
  - the general reduced funding of education and change in the source of taxes which fund schools

- District Level:
  - school-based budgeting and its impact on schools with small enrollments
  - the open enrollment policy which allows students to enroll in any school in the district except those which are closed. Mill Creek is placed between two elementary schools with larger enrollments.

In the future, school council will use its decision-making prowess to address some of the issues in the larger spheres of control, many of which have had impact on, and may well have created, the situation faced by Mill Creek school council in the fall of 1996.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Elk Island Public Schools Regional Division No. 14

Terry Gunderson, Superintendent



School Council Roles and Responsibilities

Policy

The board encourages school councils to participate as active partners in the operation of their schools.

Guidelines

- Each school council will be duly formed and constituted in a manner consistent with the requirements of the *School Act*.
- School council provides parents and the school community with a means to consult with and provide advice to the school principal on matters pertaining to the school and its operations, including the school education plan, subject to the provisions of the *School Act*.
- School councils, through their designated trustee, shall also have the opportunity to provide input to the board and Alberta Education on matters pertaining to the school and other educational issues. School councils may also make direct representation to the board.
- School council may carry out other school-related functions as identified by the principal, or the board from time to time, and agreed to by the school council.
- The principal shall be the primary administrative resource for the school council. The principal shall assist school council chair in establishing meeting agendas.
- The board encourages school council to build a supportive school community and to advocate on behalf of the school and the school system.
- The board encourages school council to work with a parallel registered society organization or to develop a subcommittee of the council as a registered society, in order to facilitate any fund-raising activities for the school which require a non-profit status.
- The board encourages the inclusion of representatives of other school community groups on school councils.
- School personnel concerns shall not be discussed at school council meetings. Parents with concerns are encouraged to present their concerns directly to the teacher or principal.
- The board encourages each school council to name one of its officers as a representative to the committee of school councils.

Committee of School Councils Roles

and Responsibilities

Policy

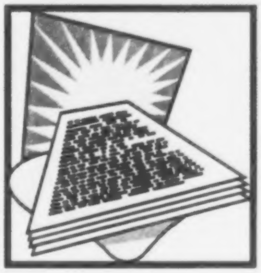
The board encourages formation of the committee of school councils (COSC) as a means to obtain further input on board policies, plans and programs, and to enhance communications amongst school councils, the board, the superintendent and the community.

Guidelines

- The prime functions of the COSC shall be to:
  - provide an opportunity for school councils to share matters of philosophy, policies and procedures relative to the education system
  - enhance communication among the school councils, the board and the community
  - provide an opportunity for school councils to collectively provide advice to the board and the government of Alberta on education matters.
- Each school council may be represented on the COSC if it so chooses.
- School personnel concerns shall not be discussed at the COSC meetings. Parents with concerns are encouraged to present their concerns directly to the teacher or principal.

SBDM Practices in Alberta:
Canadian Rockies Regional Division No. 12

Brian Callaghan, Superintendent



Policy — School Councils

It is the intention of the board of trustees that school councils/school advisory committees will act as an advisory body to the school administration and the board. However, they may be delegated certain responsibilities by the board. The board also intends that the school council/school advisory committee will conduct its business in essentially the same way and using the same meeting procedures as the board. The school council/school advisory committee will also conduct its business within its scope of authority as delegated by the board and in accordance with Alberta Education regulations.

The council will make available at the school all proceedings of their council/committee meetings and submit a copy to the board through the office of the superintendent. All meetings are to be open meetings as established in the *School Act*.

The board believes that school councils are an important link between the board and the school communities throughout the jurisdiction. The board believes that school councils can bring critical perspectives about education, the needs of the school and concerns of the community to the board. Each school council can bring a distinct voice and broad representation to the dialogue on student's learning.

1. Representatives of the board shall provide opportunities for dialogue with school councils through meetings between the board, superintendent and school councils. Furthermore, the board encourages trustees to attend school council meetings throughout the jurisdiction. When attending a school council meeting it is understood that the role of the trustee will adhere to the following principle:
    - 1.1. Trustees do not speak for the board. However, they may if authority is delegated by the board.
2. The board through the office of the superintendent shall initiate meetings with school councils.
    - 2.1. The schedule for these meetings shall be determined by the board in consultation with the school councils.

2.2. School councils shall be notified of the meeting schedule.

2.3. School councils shall be informed of the agenda items that the board wishes to discuss one month prior to the scheduled meeting date. School councils shall submit their agenda items two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date. The superintendent, in consultation with the board chair, will prepare and circulate the agenda to the board and school council five (5) days prior to the scheduled meeting date. The board will endeavour to adhere to the above timelines but will remain flexible should circumstances warrant.

2.4. Following the meeting, the superintendent shall ensure that an accurate summary of the discussion is provided to the board, school council chair and principals.

3. The board acknowledges that school councils may require a formal route to inform the board of a concern on a specific matter.

3.1. School councils are requested to submit their minutes to the board through the office of the superintendent for review, inclusion in the trustees' board agenda package and follow up as required.

3.2. School councils shall determine whether an issue can be resolved within the administrative structure.

3.3. The communication channel shall be:

school council

principal

superintendent

board.

3.4. If the school council decides that an appearance before the board is necessary, the school council chair shall request, in writing, an opportunity at which to appear before a scheduled meeting of the board and provide an outline of the issue to be discussed at least five working days before the meeting. Length of presentations to the board will be set at 15 minutes or at the discretion of the chair.

3.5. The school council request shall be included on the agenda of a regularly scheduled meeting and the school council chair or designate will be invited to make a presentation to the board.

3.6. The board, in setting the meeting date, will hear the presentation, ask questions for clarification, and may reserve its decision until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board.

3.7. In exceptional circumstances, the board may waive the requirements of the regulations.

3.8. The board may call staff members to present background information.

Appeal Procedures for Disputes on Policies Proposed or Adopted for a School between a Principal and a School Council

The board encourages the principal and school council to utilize the appeal procedure established in this policy whenever a dispute arises between the principal and school council regarding policies proposed or adopted for the school. In the event of such a dispute, either the chair of the school council or the principal may submit a written appeal to the board regarding the dispute, within 30 days from when the dispute arose. However, before moving to the appeal stage, both parties are advised that the office of the superintendent is mandated by the board to attempt a mediation of the disagreement prior to any request for an appeal.

1. When the need to hear an appeal arises, the appeal committee of the board shall establish a hearing date, time, and place which allows the parties to the appeal sufficient notice to prepare for the appeal. This may include arranging to be represented by legal counsel.

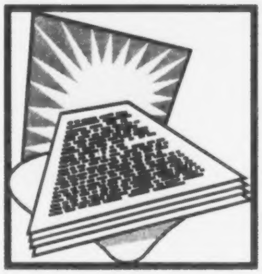
2. The appeal committee may request the services of the superintendent or secretary treasurer to assist the committee.

3. The chairman of the appeal committee shall be guided by the following agenda:

   3.1. Introduction of participants to the hearing.

   3.2. Explanation of the purpose of the appeal hearing:

      3.2.1 To provide an opportunity for both parties to make representations on the disputed issues and support their position before a decision on the appeal is made.



SBDM Practices in Alberta: Christ the Redeemer Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 3

Ronald G. Wallace, Superintendent

Role of the School Council Relative to the Principal

The board holds the principal responsible and accountable to the superintendent and ultimately to the board for all activities within the school. However, the board requires the principal to seek support and advice from the community through the school council. The board values school council advice in the following areas:

- creating an atmosphere in which community members are encouraged to share their ideas with school staff
- contributing to the curricular program by sharing their knowledge, expertise and skills with students and staff
- providing financial assistance to enhance student learning experience
- advocating the division's Catholic mission, beliefs and values in the communities around the schools
- creating a school context for student learning such as providing input relative to:
    - school philosophy
    - school climate
    - school rules.
- identifying services in the community to enhance student learning:
    - use of community resources (speakers, materials, sites for visits or partnerships)
    - counselling
    - enhancement of programs
    - specialized services
- offering suggestions for priorities for educational programs within the context of board mission and mandate and meeting the minimum requirements of Alberta Education
- offering suggestions on school budget priorities and expenditure allocations
- identifying student fund-raising activities that would be acceptable to the community and making those recommendations to an appropriate fund-raising entity
- recruiting volunteers for activities in support of schools.

- None of the foregoing shall interfere with the unique joint ward committee/school council arrangements for Assumption Ward.

- The board requires the principal to solicit input from the school council regarding ways to improve education at the school level. The principal shall provide the school council with a summary of data of:

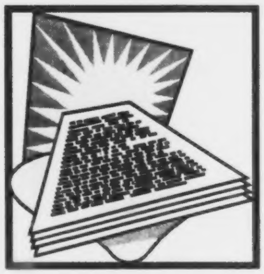
  – results of achievement tests

  – results of diploma examinations.

- The principal shall make available to the relevant ward committee through the superintendent, a written report containing recommendations and feedback regarding the summary of local test results, and any community concerns respecting the results.

- The school council may consult with the principal so that the principal may ensure that students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister. The board requires the principal to provide summaries of test data to the school council within 10 days of a request.

None of the foregoing shall interfere with the unique joint ward committee/school council arrangements for Assumption Ward.



SBDM Practices in Alberta: Toward a System of Schools — New Roles Lethbridge School District No. 51

Gary Kiernan, Superintendent

The Toward a System of Schools Committee believes that it is desirable to make a significant shift in the decision-making structure of Lethbridge School District No. 51. That shift, we believe, should result in greater responsibility and decision-making authority being placed at the school level.

Our support for this shift is founded in our beliefs about the enabling and invigorating potential of empowerment and our understanding of the expectations of the Alberta Government with respect to site-based or school-based management. We also recognize that any shifts in responsibility and/or decision-making authority must be consistent with applicable legislation, particularly the Alberta *School Act* and school district policy. We also recognize the need to ensure that decisions and actions of employees are fair and just, and we fully support the continuation of an appropriate mechanism for appeal.

The duties, functions and responsibilities should be shared by those who work at the system level and those who work at the school level. Roles were developed through extensive discussion over many weeks and represent current thinking. It must be noted, however, that we do not believe the description of practice represented on the following page is a static one. We expect and anticipate that roles and responsibilities will continue to evolve over time.

Collaborative Site-Based Management

Function	Description of Management Practice	
Instructional Services	**System**	**School**
1.1 Delivery of instruction	District level staff has responsibility for providing instructional support and monitoring the effectiveness of instruction at a system level.	School level staff has responsibility for providing effective instruction.
1.1.1 implementation of effective instruction	S – Coordinates system-wide inservices and workshops related to instruction P – Communicates inservice information from outside agencies/organizations S – Provides articles and resources related to instruction S – Assists with supervision of instruction S – Coordinates instructional initiatives: e.g., technology	P – Develops course outlines, lesson plans, units, etc. P – Supervises instruction P – Determines inservice needs of staff and organizes/arranges staff training and inservice P – Provides professional resources for staff.
1.1.2 monitoring of organization for instruction	P – Establishes policy and guidelines regarding instructional time P – Monitors School Education Plan S – Monitors IEP's	P – Establishes start and end times of the school day P – Develops timetables P – Groups students for instruction P – Develops School Education Plan P – Develops IEP's for designated special needs students
1.1.3 auxiliary services	P – Provides auxiliary services as requested: e.g., – Itinerant Behavioral – Intervention Assistants – Psychological services – REACH services P – Coordinates programs for students with special needs: e.g., – PUB, mild/moderate, Program Enhancement Project (PEP) – Resident Students of Government – Consultative services as available – Media Centre – Rehabilitative Assistant support	P – Organizes and supervises auxiliary services provided by system P – Accesses additional auxiliary services as required: e.g., – CYCW – REACH – C Team
1.2 Curriculum	District level staff has responsibility for coordinating curriculum implementation, providing curriculum support and monitoring curriculum implementation.	School level staff has responsibility for providing instruction consistent with the Alberta Program of Studies and approved locally developed courses.
1.2.1 implementation of new programs	P – Communicates information on new programs P – Coordinates initial inservice and text selection P – Purchases new resources for review P – Coordinates other professional development activities (as requested) P – Monitors new program/resource implementation P – Establishes and charts District Committees: e.g., technology P – Facilitates development of new local system-wide programs: e.g., AIDS, Child Abuse, Lion's Quest	P – Identifies curriculum inservice needs P – Plans professional development days P – Identifies the need for resources and materials to implement new programs P – Recognizes, identifies and describes needs that lead to new programs P – Develops, implements and monitors new programs P – Develops curriculum for locally developed courses

		P – Integrates technology into programs
1.2.2 maintenance of programs	P – Monitors system programs P – Coordinates purchase of specialized equipment P – Operates Media Centre P – Coordinates ad hoc committees to address issues on programming; e.g., Gifted and Talented P – Articulates programs across divisions and schools P – Establishes goals for the system	P – Reviews, selects and purchases resources P – Articulates programs with other schools P – Provides programs and maintains program resources P – Provides inservice to maintain programs P – Utilizes technology as appropriate P – Identifies needs for specialized equipment
1.3 Outcomes	District level staff has responsibility for coordinating system level assessment activities, establishing system level expectations/standards and monitoring practices and results.	School level staff has responsibility for measuring and monitoring the effectiveness of programs and instruction at the school level
1.3.1 assessment	P – Establishes system level expectations/standards P – Maintains security of examinations and assessment records P – Develops system models and guidelines as required; e.g., Elementary Evaluation Handbook P – Coordinates Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Exams (in addition, exemptions and special provisions)	P – Identifies students for testing P – Administers mandated tests; e.g., – PAT's – PDE's, etc. P – Utilizes other assessment tools as required – C-CAT, etc. P – Requests psycho-educational assessments as required
1.3.2 evaluation	P – Reviews and interprets school and system level assessment data; e.g., PAT, PDE P – Awards "status" to students with special needs	P – Analyzes and interprets school level assessment data; e.g., PAT, PDE P – Develops and implements IEP's for special needs students P – Develops transition plan for students moving to new programs or schools
1.3.3 reporting	P – Establishes requirements/standards P – Reports system level assessment to Board and public; e.g., PAT, PDE and data P – Prepares and distributes School District Annual Report – Provides reports of any aspect of instruction to the Board upon request	P – Establishes report card dates P – Modifies report card with approval P – Determines time and format of Parent-Teacher Conferences P – Prepares and shares school achievement results with community and parents
1.3.4 plans for improvement	P – Establishes requirements/standards for School Education Plan P – Reviews school results statements P – Monitors School Education Plan – Makes recommendations regarding the reallocation of District resources	P – Reviews diagnostic assessment data and develops School Education Plan
2.1 Alternate Education	District level staff has responsibility for identifying needs for alternate education, for preparing proposals for consideration by the Board for allocating resources, and for operating and monitoring approved alternate education programs.	School level staff has responsibility for recommending students for placement in alternate education programs and for accommodating students in transition from/to alternate education programs.

2.1.1 outreach programs	P – Coordinates outreach programming and student placement	P – Makes referrals for placement in programs P – Cooperates with outreach staff in accommodating students returning to "regular" programming
2.1.2 home schooling	P – Approves applications, provides resources and supervises instruction	S – Provides access to library resources as requested
2.1.3 homebound (long-term illness)	S – Provides additional human resources (as available) for homebound students	P – Provides homebound services as required
2.2 System Programs	District level staff has responsibility for coordinating system-wide programs and services.	School level staff has responsibility for coordinating system-wide programs, personnel and/or services within the school.
2.2.1 native education	P – Selects, hires and supervises staff P – Coordinates purchase of required resources and materials	S – Coordinates program and staff within the school
2.2.2 cooperative education	S – Provides coordination of staff	P – Plans and coordinates work experience and/or work study programs P – Supervises students involved in work experience and work study
2.2.3 ESL	P – Provides identification of ESL students P – Allocates and monitors use of resources	S – Initial identification of ESL students P – Provides and assesses programs for students with ESL status
2.2.4 counseling	P – Employs, supervises and coordinates system level counseling staff: e.g., elementary liaison counselors, CYCW S – Coordinates Crisis Response Team	P – Develops and implements a counseling model for schools P – Supervises and organizes counseling staff within school
2.2.5 ECS	P – Identifies PUG students and monitors programs P – Coordinates registration process	P – Develops, implements and assesses program effectiveness for ECS and PUG students
2.2.6 Media Centre	P – Reviews and selects resources for placement in Media Centre P – Collects, catalogues and distributes resources P – Repairs and maintains resources	S – Identifies and recommends resources for placement in Media Centre
3.1 Funding	District level staff has responsibility for determining eligibility of students for special funding and for making required applications for such funding.	School level staff has responsibility for initial identification of students eligible for funding and for using any special funds received for the designated purpose.

Instructional Services **General Administration**	**System**	**School**
4.1 System Coordination	District level staff has responsibility for coordinating a number of system-wide competitions and activities.	School level staff has responsibility for selecting which competitions/activities their students will participate in.
4.1.1 IODE	S – Makes contact	P – Contacts volunteers
4.1.2 Kiwanis	S – Makes contact	P – Contacts volunteers
4.1.3 Arts Alive and Well	P – Coordinates	
4.1.4 Athletic Association		P – Pays for services and monitors
4.1.5 Outdoor Education	S – Maintains and schedules materials	P – Accesses resources
4.1.6 Instrument Repair and Accompanist	S – Coordinates and administers repair fund	P – Selects and pays accompanist
4.1.7 Coordination of outside agencies	P – Screens requests S – Provides representation to community agencies S – Administers trust funds according to guidelines as required	P – Accesses services

Administrative Services	**System**	**School**
1. Human Resources	The District has responsibility for coordinating the staffing function in order to ensure that qualified staff are employed in accordance with *the School Act*, District policy, collective agreements and other relevant legal mandate.	The school has responsibility for selecting, supervising and evaluating staff.
1.1 Staff recruitment, selection, placement	P – Recruits all staff P – Conducts initial screening of all applicants P – Makes formal offer of employment and enters into formal contract of employment P – Selects and places administrative staff	P – Selects and places all staff except administrators from pool of qualified candidates identified by District
1.2 Staff orientation, training and professional development	P – Establishes expectations/priorities, policies, general parameters and procedures for staff inservice/training P – Provides District orientation for new employees P – Provides training/inservice/PD for administrative personnel	P – Develops and administers school level training/inservice/PD plan P – Provides school orientation for new employees
1.3 Staff supervision and evaluation	P – Develops policy and guidelines for supervision of staff P – Develops policy, guidelines, procedures and forms for evaluation of staff P – Provides supervision and evaluation of principals	P – Develops school level procedures for staff supervision P – Supervises and evaluates all school-based staff, except principals.

April 4/95 TSSSBM S – Secondary P – Primary

Workshop Idea #9: Developing New Roles & Responsibilities

Purpose: to review the critical elements of SBDM

to rewrite roles and responsibilities in light of SBDM principles

to plan for the implementation of new roles.

Material: overheads or articles discussing SBDM, chart paper, pens, current resource manuals

Time: 2 hours

Opener

Participants in groups do a KWL analysis:

K — What do I **know** about SBDM?

W — What do I **want** to know about SBDM?

L — What have I **learned?** (this is reserved for the closure)

After completing the K and W portions, the workshop leader uses this to review the critical elements of SBDM (Chapter One of the resource guide).

Changed Roles

In "job-alike" groups, complete the T-chart on the following page.

(Note — this activity follows a thorough discussion and understanding of the definitions, rationale and critical elements of SBDM.)

When completed, discuss and make changes and additions.

ROLE: ______________________________

Traditional Descriptors	SBDM Descriptors

The "trustee" description is given to the "teacher". The central office description is examined by the "principal," etc. What questions are there? What changes or additions?

Arrive at a consensus for the role of each group in the SBDM model that is being developed. These role descriptions will form the basis for the description in an SBDM manual for the jurisdiction.

Individual Assignment

Based on our common definition, rationale and an understanding of the role of critical elements of SBDM, complete the chart on the next page.

ROLE: ____________________

To Add New Activities/ Responsibilities	To Keep Core Activities/ Responsibilities	To Let Go Activities/ Responsibilities

- Share the chart with two or three other people who have the same role.
- Share the chart with two or three people who would be getting things you have decided to let go.
- Share the chart with two or three people from whom you would be getting new things to do.

Discussion questions:

- Did the charts match? What happened to some tasks?
- What processes must change to accommodate the new roles?
- What action/activities or policies must be enacted to ensure the new roles are put into practice?
- How will you evaluate the changed roles?

Application

- A small task group is charged with writing the new role descriptions for the jurisdiction and/or school.
- Each individual undertakes to change his or her role in keeping with the new description. Start with one or two items, pair up with someone who will help you to monitor the changing behaviours.
- In two or three months, review the charts and the role descriptions.

Chapter 5

Decision-Making Processes and Models

School-Based Decision Making Resource Guide: Focus on Teaching and Learning

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Chapter Five

Introduction

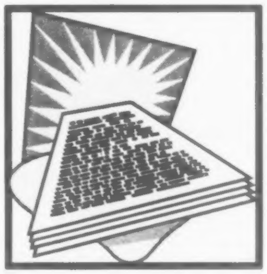
This chapter starts by examining decision making at the school level. The focus article by Gordon McIntosh presents a complete examination of school-based decision making through a conversation with two principals. Although the focus is on the decision-making role of the principal, the article includes the roles of other staff and members of the school community. The building of a collaborative school culture that was stressed in McKinnon's article in Chapter Two is also a critical feature in decision making. Several of the examples in Chapters Two and Three are also examples of decision-making models.

Following the focus article is a general examination of SBDM models for schools from the perspective of structures. This is illustrated by a series of tested-in-Alberta examples.

Issues of decision making are at the centre of the shift to more local or school-based authority. There are several key questions:

- How should the continued input of school councils, parents and community members be sought and included in decisions of policy, finance and programs?
- At what level should decisions be made? jurisdiction? school? classroom?
- How will this decision be made?
- Who should make the decisions?
- How should the decisions be made?

The final section examines the issue of determining the decision-making responsibility first between central office and the schools, and second among partners at the school level. Who makes what decision is also included in the McIntosh article. The workshop ideas in this chapter focus on "Deciding about Decisions."



Decision-Making Processes and Models

Gordon McIntosh, Professor and Assistant Dean,
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Overview of the Article

This article is about different ways of making decisions in schools committed to school-based decision making. The emphasis is on collaborative decision making, but we recognize that other ways of making decisions are used in schools, and these are discussed as well. We point out the conditions and circumstances which suggest that one form of decision making rather than the others is preferred. Although we emphasize the involvement of members of the teaching staff in decision-making processes, we also recognize the important role played by other members of the school community — school council, support staff members, students and parents, in particular.

First, we discuss different ways of making decisions in schools. Five decision-making processes are presented, two of which are collaborative forms of decision making. The remaining three are decision-making processes in which the school principal makes the decision with varying forms of consultation with staff, parents and students, as appropriate.

We place special emphasis on the role of the principal in school-based decision making. In the second part of this article, we discuss this special role and why we think that a special role for the principal is essential in collaborative decision making. We also acknowledge that there are pitfalls in ascribing to principals the special role that we are calling for, and that the principal must work very hard, with the other members of the school community, to establish a school culture which is supportive of collaborative decision making.

In the third part of the article, we discuss a special kind of decision making — the decision as to who makes what decisions. That is to say, we assert that preceding every decision-making process there is an initial decision as to how a specific decision will be made — who is involved in the decision-making process and how they are involved.

In order to make school-based decision making as effective as possible, it is necessary for trusting relationships to develop among teachers, parents, students and support staff in the school. We refer to this as building a collaborative school culture. The fourth section deals with trust as an essential characteristic of the relationships between members of the school community and how trusting relationships can be nurtured in schools.

Throughout the chapter, we present a dialogue between two principals experienced in school-based decision making. Principal Mountjoy and Principal Yaseyko (both names are pseudonyms) help us understand the important issues that all school communities must address in making SBDM work for them.

Different Ways of Making Decisions

In each of these stories (told by Principals Mountjoy and Yaseyko) a decision process is described in the text while the sidebars on the right and left comment on selected aspects of the story so as to highlight important characteristics of the decision process. In presenting these stories — and the decision process they illustrate — we pass no judgment on what Principal Yaseyko or Principal Mountjoy did in each case. Our focus is on *what* they did and *why* they did it. Our general position is that any decision process may be appropriate, depending on the circumstances. Later, we present the analytical tools which can be used to decide on the appropriate decision process for a particular set of circumstances.

Decision Process I:
The Principal Makes the Decision Unilaterally

Principal Mountjoy discusses the Winchester teacher evaluation policy:

Before I went into the principalship at Winchester Junior High School, I made a decision unilaterally over the course of the summer. I think the quality of the decision was pretty good but it was absolutely panned by the teaching staff at Winchester because of the way I went about making this decision. I had some strong views about what teacher evaluation ought to look like. The principal before me had in place a plan that had the principal sitting at the back of classrooms, filling out a five-page list of discrete skills with checkmarks. At the end of the form, he came up with an overall evaluation of the teacher using a scale of 1 to 10 or whatever. It just didn't fit with what I wanted to do.

Teacher evaluation is a matter of considerable interest to teachers. They also have a great deal of expertise as to what is important in evaluating teachers' instructional competence.

At the first staff meeting, I introduced my thinking about teacher evaluation and outlined the policy for the members of the staff. I thought they would love it because it was an approach to supervision and evaluation that showed more respect for their professionalism and acknowledged that no single visit to the classroom could suffice as a means of measuring a teacher on any scale. It was an approach to evaluation that involved goal setting, some classroom visitation, some discussion between myself and the teacher and a written performance evaluation which was discussed with the teacher. It seemed to me that it was a less hard-edged approach to teacher evaluation than the one that they had experienced over the past few years.

When I stopped talking there was silence in the staff meeting. Then one of the teachers spoke out and asked how I could think it would be reasonable for me to change the school's teacher evaluation policy. Another teacher, with whom I had many conflicts over the course of that year, asked in the midst of the discussion: What made me think that I had the background to supervise and evaluate his instruction? He was angry at the time. My reading of it was that he was angry because I changed the policy without consulting the staff.

We had not spent any time talking about what we were committed to regarding teacher evaluation. We stuck with the policy, however. By the end of the year, the staff agreed that we were going in the direction we wanted for teacher evaluations. They would certainly not go back to checklist-type evaluations.

Nevertheless, Principal Mountjoy does not consult with the staff about this decision, let alone involve them in making the decision. He makes a unilateral decision.

This is not typical of the way Principal Mountjoy works with staff in decision making. Why do you think he acted in this way?

Staff members are resistant to the principal's decision.

One staff member, probably speaking for others, asserts that the principal has no right to make a decision about teacher evaluation without consulting the staff.

The principal's views apparently carried the day. But were there costs associated with the use of this decision strategy?

Decision Process II:
The Principal Solicits Advice from Teachers and Others Before Making a Decision

a) Principal Mountjoy comments on day-to-day decisions in schools:

There are thousands of day-to-day decisions that I make as a principal which do not involve votes or discussions with staff members. The school would come to a shuddering halt if all the decisions that the principal had to make were made by vote. I think where the collaborative decision process applies is when we are talking about school-level policy decisions, not the day-to-day stuff certainly. With those day-to-day decisions I may run down the hallway and talk to a couple of teachers and come back and make a decision. There are consultations but I make the decision.

b) Principal Mountjoy buys a snowblower:

I think the involvement of people in decision making really depends on the type of decision that needs to be made. You have your school council and there are some decisions that need to be taken to the school council, either because you as an administrator have chosen to do so or you have been told that you need to do it this way. There are provincially-mandated matters that require consultation with parents so that parents have a say in what the school will be doing. On the other hand, there are day-to-day decisions where you involve the people who will be most affected by the decision. Suppose it is a Division I concern — let's say the assignment of special needs children among classes or the acquisition of teaching resources — then you deal with the Division I teachers and seek their advice. If it has something to do with the physical plant of the school, you don't necessarily bring in several teachers after school to talk about whether or not we need a new snowblower. You involve the custodian and you want his or her support for the decision.

Collaborative decision making is important when a school policy decision is being made. Day-to-day decisions are a different matter, however. There may be consultation involved but typically the principal (or whoever has been delegated responsibility for this decision area) makes the decision.

Decision Process III: The Principal Explains and Discusses the Issue with the Staff

a) Principal Yaseyko discusses school discipline:

When we are dealing with individual kids, a lot of decisions about school discipline cannot be made in a collaborative way. As a principal, I do a lot of information gathering, but the ultimate decision falls to me as the principal or to the assistant principal.

b) Principal Yaseyko discusses staffing decisions:

Staffing is one important aspect of the work of a school where I seek information from members of the staff and members of the parent community, but ultimately I make all decisions regarding staffing. The budget has to balance. We need to involve staff in doing a needs assessment of how the school staff will be configured and how best to do it. Having done that, I make the hard decisions.

c) Principal Mountjoy discusses a staffing decision:

At the beginning of the budgeting process, I make it clear to staff and parents that decisions regarding staff will not be left to the group. If staff cutbacks are necessary, I have to make that decision. I could not imagine sitting at this table and voting on whether or not an individual is going to have a job. Someone has to make that decision and that should not be made by the individual's colleagues.

Decision Process IV: The Principal Facilitates Open Discussion

Principal Mountjoy discusses the school budgeting process:

Before becoming principal at Winchester, I was principal at Norton. There were two kinds of decision processes that I used as a principal at Norton School. The first of these was reasonably well-planned and thought out ahead of time. This was a process for planning the budget and program for the school for the following year: creating a budget document and allocating resources to the different parts of the plan for next year's program. The second decision process had to do with the routine of conducting a school where some of the decisions can be predicted and some cannot.

When I thought about involving staff members in decision making, I felt that I had to be true to my beliefs about people. On the one hand, I knew that I wasn't going to be able to give away all of the decisions to the members of the teaching staff. There were decisions that I had to make for a variety of reasons. I had to be clear and up front with the teachers as to how we were going to be dealing with our decisions. I tried to do this — I wasn't 100 per cent successful but it wasn't for lack of intention and effort. Whenever there was a major decision that I had to make, I tried to let the people I was talking with know that ahead of time and I explained the reasons to them. Other than that limitation, my thinking about decision making was that I should be a colleague in the decision-making process. I was one person; I had one vote.

It was difficult for teachers to see me as simply one person with one vote. On the next day, I might have to fill out a performance review on them. But we tried. In this whole budget-setting process, we started from an assessment of where we were in the school and we tried to identify three or four areas of priority. At this stage we talked about general things — what should we be doing to move the school forward? We might be talking about improving discipline or improving language learning or enhancing connections with the parents in the community. At this stage, we were a group of teachers and parents working together to develop general priority areas.

You will notice one voice missing at this point — the students' voice. At the time, I just didn't have in my bag of tricks a good way of incorporating the students into this kind of decision-making process. I think probably there are some good ways of doing that. We included students mostly by informing them of what we had done and asking for their feedback. But clearly they were operating at a different level from the parents and the teachers.

Principal Mountjoy distinguishes between two general kinds of decision processes — routine, day-to-day decisions and decisions that set future directions for the school.

The principal tries to communicate clearly the reasons for choosing a particular decision process.

Staff and parents are fully involved in decisions establishing general school priorities.

Teachers and others involved in decision making have to know up front what the rules of the decision game are. Each person has to know how the decision will be made and what their role in the decision-making process will be.

The advice of parents is sought but the decisions about the specific program changes for next year are made by the staff.

Once we had agreed on the set of priorities, the process that I used was divided into two parts, and involved two different groups of people. One group would be made up of staff members and within that group we used the one person, one vote decision-making procedure. As a group of professionals we were attempting to translate the general priorities into specific statements of what should be done in the school. From that point on, the parental involvement was advisory. I felt that the parents should always have an understanding about the specific decisions we were making about the program and why we were making them, but I felt that the teachers were in a better position to develop this kind of specific program.

The decision process depends on the situation. Notice how three different decision processes are used in the development of the budget and program plan.

As a staff we were dealing with the "technology" of teaching and learning — how these priorities would be addressed. In many ways these meetings were celebrations. People would get together and have potluck dinners. We were not just planning for next year. We were celebrating what we had done this year. These were really enjoyable experiences for us as a staff.

From time to time, our parent group would meet with teachers who were representatives of our staff planning group. We would talk about the plans that we were formulating and why we were taking the directions that we were proposing and we would ask for parental input. It was understood that their advice would be taken back to the other group — the first group made up entirely of teachers — who would then work with the parents' views. At the end of the process, we would have identified what our priorities were for the coming year and what specific program changes we were proposing. I suppose we could call these our action plans. We would not as yet have assigned money/resources to our plan. At that point, I would provide information to the staff on the resources that we had and how they might be expended next year if we kept the same organization that we had this year.

Here is where it got a little bit dicey. I still wanted to have one person, one vote in deciding how the resources would be spent. But I didn't feel right about having teachers vote on whether another teacher's position was going to be declared redundant. When the decisions moved into that area, I asked members of the staff to talk about programs, not people. I would be the person to make the decisions about staffing. I think they understood why. We talked about it and nobody in the room wanted to be in a position to be voting on anybody else's job.

For any money decisions that didn't have staffing decisions associated with them, I did operate on the one person, one vote principle. At the end of that process, we would have a budget and program plan that I could turn over to the associate superintendent.

Decision Process V: The Principal Helps the Group Achieve Consensus

Principal Mountjoy discusses the development of school discipline policies:

When I was hired as the principal at Norton School, it was with the understanding that I was there to help staff work on improving the school climate, and to help them deal with the violence and discipline issues they were experiencing. I had worked with the staff as a consultant on these issues the year before, so everyone knew where I was coming from. They all supported the directions that I was proposing.

Note that the basic principles underlying the school discipline policy are decided first and they are decided by consensus.

We started by coming to agreement on some general principles about what we thought about kids and the way in which we ought to do things. Obviously, we wanted to be sure that we treated the students with respect and dignity. We wanted to deal with them in a way that we would want to be dealt with ourselves, as much as we possibly could. Responsibility, accountability — we dealt with all of these things that I think should come before writing a discipline policy. We talked about these things and came to an agreement which included the responsibility that staff members would have for discipline and the responsibilities that I as the principal would have.

The staff, with input from the school council, decides by consensus decision making what the discipline policy for Norton School should be.

The principal had to be directly involved in school discipline because there were so many serious problems at this school. We needed to create a mechanism to provide for my involvement, while at the same time ensuring that teachers were assuming their share of the responsibility as well. It was not just to be a matter of sending kids out of class. We had to come to agreement about where the balance should be and who was responsible for what action. We discussed our discipline policy, and we did it all by building a consensus within the staff and the involvement and commitment from parents and the school council.

When I got to Winchester School, there was not really any discipline policy in place. There were two factions in the staff. One faction was made up of some fairly new staff members who managed their own problems with kids. Their discipline depended upon developing positive relationships with the kids and this tended to work well for them. For another 10 teachers, however, they really wanted the kids to stand up, salute and listen. If the kids ever stepped out of line in the classroom, these teachers wanted the principal to support their decisions without question.

I wasn't prepared to do that. I didn't involve these teachers in any kind of process to arrive at the position that I was taking on how we would handle discipline problems in the school. We talked about discipline during the course of the year but, unlike my approach to the same issue at Norton, I let the Winchester teachers know that things were going to be quite different; not necessarily was I going to give them unqualified support. I let them know that they would get complete support as long as they treated the kids with respect and dignity but when they made mistakes in classrooms, I wasn't necessarily going to support them without looking carefully at what actually happened.

With regard to school discipline, the staff and the principal at Winchester did not have a shared commitment to the purposes they were trying to achieve.

In this section we have discussed five approaches to decision making involving the principal and members of the school community — teachers, in particular, but also members of the support staff, parents and students.

Decision Processes IV and V are collaborative processes. These processes are steered along by the principal but the group makes the decision, either by majority vote (Decision Process IV) or by consensus (Decision Process V). We have also seen how the specific conditions in a particular school affect the choice of decision process for the same issue. (Principal Mountjoy at Norton School used Decision Process V to decide on a school discipline policy; at Winchester School, Decision Process II was used.)

In Decision Processes I to III, the principal makes the decision. In this sense, these decision processes are noncollaborative. But this does not mean that staff are necessarily kept at a distance when noncollaborative decisions are made. Staff members, school councils and others are typically be consulted when these decision processes are used.

The way in which Decision Processes I to III are managed is every bit as important as the management of the collaborative processes (IV and V) in building a collaborative culture in the school. We will return to this important matter.

But before we do this, we deal with another issue which may be bothering many readers: why are we placing the principal at the centre of decision-making processes in schools?

Note here that Principal Mountjoy does not attempt to build consensus on the staff about discipline when he first arrives at Winchester. After consulting with a few staff members and others, thereby getting the lay of the land, he simply tells the staff what he is prepared to do and what he is not prepared to do (Decision Process II).

The Facilitating Role of the Principal in School-Based Decision Making

Under Section 15 of the *School Act* and the direction set by the *Three-Year Business Plan*, the principal is the key educational leader at the school level, who will provide leadership in successful school-based decision making. Principals must work with parents, teachers and members of the community to establish a school-based decision making process to develop school policies and budgets as well as to establish the scope of school program and extra-curricular activities.

— Background statement,
School-Based Decision
Making, January 9, 1996
Alberta Education
Policy 1.8.2

In all schools that practise school-based decision-making, regular arrangements for making group decisions are established. We will refer to these regular arrangements as "structures." These structures take different forms. Decision-making structures may be quite formal, such as the school council, with mandate, membership and procedures established by provincial legislation and school district policies. But many school-based decisions are made by less formal decision-making structures such as the following:

- the staff meeting
- department and grade-level meetings
- student councils
- special purpose committees and task forces.

School council and the staff meeting are especially important structures for deciding school policies; i.e., agreed upon courses of action in regularly recurring situations in schools. For example, schools have policies on attendance and tardiness. Schools have policies on student behaviour and school discipline. Schools may have policies on specific matters such as wearing ball caps and more general matters such as academic performance standards that a student must meet to be eligible for participation on school teams.

However specific or general a school policy may be, for our purposes a policy statement is simply a decision — that is, it is the outcome of a decision-making process. A policy is a special kind of decision and our contention here is that the principal plays a unique role in all school-based decision making — whether it be in relation to policies or day-to-day operational matters. What is the nature of this special role? Why does the principal have this special role?

We cannot think of a better way to explain the role of the principal in school-based decision making than to compare the principal's role to that of the quarterback on a football team. The selection of the decision process by the principal can be compared to the plan selected by the quarterback for moving the football down the field. It is important to remember that every member of the team on the field has an essential role to play in moving the ball down the field. The quarterback may have only a limited role on a particular play, and a much more active role on other plays. But prior to *every* play he or she consults with team members, then selects the play, and initiates the action. The coordinated action of all 12 team members on the field is essential in moving the ball forward.

In a similar way, the principal quarterbacks decision making in the school. There are several reasons (including the *School Act*) for this:

- The principal is at the focal point of the flow of information in the school. This includes information which originates from outside the school (from Alberta Education, the school district office and parents for example) and also information internal to the school (from support staff members, teachers and students).
- Complaints, concerns and problems are a special kind of information. These also are directed to the principal because of the expectation held by all members of the school community that the principal is responsible for bringing resolution to the problems which arise in the day-to-day life of the school.
- Most school administrators are vitally aware of the importance of knowing what is going on in their schools and make it a priority of their daily work life to gather information on what teachers and students are thinking and doing.

The Principal Works with Others in Making Decisions

In claiming that the principal has a special role in decision making, we are not by any means saying that the principal makes the important decisions in the school by him or herself. We are asserting a special role for the principal, yes! But this special role is a facilitating role. It results from the very nature of the way that organizations work. For example:

- The principal has special access to information.
- The principal is often the first person to know what decisions must be made and when these decisions must be made.
- Because of the nature of the principal's responsibilities (as outlined in the *School Act* Section 15), teachers and parents and board officials often bring decision situations to the attention of the principal. The principal is the person to whom others go when they have a concern.
- Therefore, it is the principal who must structure the involvement of others in responding to these decision situations.

The Principal Sets the Parameters for Decision Making

Principal Yaseyko talks about developing a school discipline policy:

I think we can illustrate the importance of parameters for decision making by talking about establishing a school-wide discipline policy. There is a tendency for people to want to form a committee and write a new rule book when it is time to look at the school's approach to discipline. We can have problems if we don't approach this carefully. We have to make sure that we don't get ourselves into difficulty because it often is the case that we are not all committed to the same principles of student behaviour and teacher/student relationships.

Before we launch ourselves into a process for developing a new school-wide discipline policy, we have to pause and identify the principles from which we are going to work in selecting our committee and writing the rule book. When I was a teacher, I can remember a situation where a principal, probably out of frustration and exhaustion more than anything else, said to a group of four or five individuals on the staff who were pressing for a new school discipline policy, "Fine, if you think you can come up with something better, by all means go to work and bring back to the full staff your recommendations." Now as it turned out, the direction the four or five individuals were proposing created a lot of dissension in the school staff. The underlying current, though unstated, was that the majority of the teachers were saying to this minority, "If you were only better teachers, you wouldn't need this kind of discipline policy either."

The principal is always the key person in structuring decision-making situations. Principal Yaseyko's comments are a warning to principals: before setting a decision process in motion, make sure that you have thought it out before you begin. Otherwise you might arrive somewhere you don't want to go.

It is important for the principal to monitor the progress of committees that have been assigned responsibility for working up recommendations for a staff decision process. It is important that committees report regularly to the full staff meeting and to the school council on their progress. This makes it possible for advice from the whole staff and school council to be given to the committee, so that they don't get too far off in a direction that the rest of the staff is unable to accept.

Setting Up Decision Situations

a) Principal Yaseyko talks about a decision regarding a professional development day:

My first year at Euston School, I had a brilliant idea about how we would proceed to address the board's priorities in our budget planning process. I decided that we would take one of our two professional development days and involve the staff and school council members in working up the plan for addressing the board priorities.

It was a unilateral decision that I made and I made it because I wanted to get the staff and school council involved in the process. I wanted to make sure that they had ownership of the priorities we were committing to for the coming year. So I made the decision pretty much unilaterally that we would have staff working in groups of two or three and I asked them to pick one of the board's priorities and use the survey results that we had available to us from our school district — student surveys, parent surveys, teacher surveys — to come up with a plan.

School district policy also sets limits on what a school staff may wish to propose for a particular policy.

Probably two-thirds of the staff worked well in their small groups and came up with some really good ideas. About one-third of the people, probably because the process was foisted upon them, did not function well in the group activity, and at the end of the day it was obvious they did not want to be engaged in the activity.

When I think about this, I realize that commitment has to be nurtured and developed.

b) Principal Mountjoy talks about building consensus on staff about the priority issues:

My work in decision making with the staff at Norton School was far easier than my work at Winchester. At Norton, right from the beginning we had a clear understanding of the issues that we faced. We realized that we were in it together. The issues in an inner-city school just hit you in the face. No one has to look around for them. No one has to work long and hard to pull these issues together. Everybody faces these issues everyday. It is easy to get your staff and parent community together and say, "Look, we have issues and let's see what we can do about them."

At Winchester School, sure there were issues but they were not so much "in your face." We needed to work at identifying these issues, bring them to the surface and decide which issues were more important than others. In an inner-city school the most important issues are evident.

My biggest problem at Winchester School was that I didn't really understand the situation I was in. I just assumed that it would be like Norton School. Everybody would come together around whatever the issues were. That didn't happen at Winchester. I think that if I had been a wiser principal, I would have tried to work with staff to help them pull together to think about what the issues were and how we were going to address them.

There are different ways in which a staff can resist decisions made unilaterally by the principal and one of the most effective ways is by passive resistance.

The principal must take the time to build commitment by the staff and school council to the importance of an issue and to the means of best addressing it.

Sometimes the principal must work hard with his or her staff and school council to help them identify the priority issues that they must address.

The principal does not have to be intrusive in helping staff come to a shared sense of direction.

In issues like discipline policy or budget priorities it is critical to have school council involvement and ownership.

Desired Characteristics of a Principal in School-Based Decision Making

a) Principal Yaseyko on leadership:

The principal must have a good sense of the strengths of the people with whom he or she works.

The principal has to work hard to maintain a climate of collegiality in his or her working relationships.

In a truly participatory model of decision making, the principal facilitates, mentors and empowers but doesn't dominate or intrude. It is like the referee of a well-refereed hockey game. You can't remember who the referee was but you do remember that it was a good hockey game. The principal is the person who has to ask: How best do I get everybody on board? Even though I may have a vision of where the school is heading, I can't go there without everyone walking with me. A leader without followers is just someone going for a walk.

As a principal, you have to have people helping you make decisions. Every person at the table has to feel that they have had a say in the decision — that they have contributed in some way.

One of the skills that the principal needs is to be able to identify the strengths that all of the members of the staff and parental community bring to the table. The principal has to identify any weaknesses that people bring to the table and allow them to work on areas of strength. I see that skill as a really critical component of school-based decision making. You don't want to give people tasks they can't do. You don't want to ask people questions that they can't answer.

b) Principal Yaseyko on the importance of setting clear limits for decision making:

It is important to monitor the work of committees to ensure that they don't set off in directions that you won't be able to support when they report back to the full group.

School-based decision making places heavy demands on the principal and staff.

The principal probably is the person who understands the roadblocks in decision making best of all. We are aware of how many instructional minutes per week we have to provide and we are aware that we can't hire teachers outside of the collective agreement. Sometimes you are aware of roadblocks that you can't share publicly. For example, you may have privileged information that is for your eyes only that you might use to temper whatever decision comes out of a meeting.

I will give you an example: when teachers and parents are working together on a discipline policy, they may come up with a hierarchical, cut-and-dried discipline policy. If this happens, you have this consequence; if you have three of these kinds of consequences, then you are out of the school! You have a dilemma because if you allow this group to continue to make those kinds of decisions, and provide you with a final report that you know in your heart you can't support, and that is in opposition to the *School Act* and board policy, then you have a significant problem. At what point do you colour the process by jumping in and saying, "I am not so sure that we can move in this direction and here are the reasons why?" That is a delicate situation.

Deciding Who Makes What Decision

In the two preceding sections of this article, we discussed five different decision processes used in school-based decision making, and we discussed the way in which the principal "quarterbacks" decision making in schools. In this section, we discuss the considerations that must be taken into account by the quarterback in deciding who makes what decisions.

We found the work of W. K. Hoy and C. J. Tarter (Collaborative decision making: Empowering teachers. *The Canadian Administrator*, 32[2], 1–9, November 1992) to be helpful in understanding the thinking of principals as they decide on the best ways to involve teachers, school councils and other members of the school community in decision making, given a commitment to empower others as effective, engaged decision-makers in the school community.

These writers assert that the school leader asks three questions as he or she decides how to set up a decision-making process:

- The relevance question: Who has a personal stake in the outcome of the decision?
- The expertise question: Who has the expertise to contribute to the decision?
- The commitment question: In relation to this particular decision situation, are the people I'm considering for involvement in making this decision committed to the broader purposes of the school?

Let's see how these questions can be used to understand Principal Mountjoy's actions as he sets about involving the school staff in deciding on Andrew's school program.

Deciding on Andrew's Classes

Principal Mountjoy talks about a decision regarding inclusion of a student with behaviour disorders:

A family had just moved into our community and brought with them a recently adopted child with behaviour disorders. This was my first year at Winchester School and I had been told that the school had no history of working with students with behaviour disorders. There were some other BD students in the community and I suspect that they and their parents hadn't felt welcome at Winchester and the parents had decided to send their children to schools with special programs outside of our community. Andrew's parents were adamant that they wanted their child to attend our school and they wanted the child to be integrated into regular classrooms.

Although Principal Mountjoy does not make his thinking processes explicit here, it is obvious that he has answered "Yes" to both the **relevance** and **expertise** questions.

Note that staff members do not share a common commitment to inclusion of BD children in their classrooms.

The staff make another key decision. Only the teachers who supported the integration decision would be asked to take Andrew into their classes. This addresses the **commitment** question. Only the teachers who share a commitment to integrating Andrew are affected by the decision. The others, in effect, are taken out of the decision process.

I thought that the decision regarding a program for Andrew should be made by our full staff at a staff meeting. I had a pretty full description of Andrew's problems, but I also asked the school district consultant to come with me to the staff meeting.

Following our presentation and a lot of discussion, the staff decided that Andrew should be integrated fulltime into our school program. Not all of the teachers supported that. In fact, several of the teachers felt that it was not their responsibility to be working with kids who misbehaved in any way.

Clearly this child was not going to be a model student. At the staff meeting I remember four or five teachers who were really quite vocal in their insistence that they didn't want the child in their classrooms, but the staff as a whole didn't change their position. They still wanted the child to be integrated. I felt this was a good idea as well and so did the district consultant. The staff decided that the teachers who were most vocal in their opposition would simply not be involved with the child. I was entirely comfortable with that decision. I knew it would save both Andrew and me a lot of grief if Andrew was not placed in one of their classrooms. It simply would not have worked well for the child. On the other hand, these teachers had their day in court and had a sense that they had won because they did not have to be involved .

I thought that the worst thing I could have done in handling the situation was to assign Andrew to his classes myself. I thought that this was one decision where I really needed the teachers to say, "Yes, I am prepared to do this." I thought that we needed to work together in deciding how to work with this child and his parents. I didn't go into this just assuming that we would integrate the child because there wasn't a history of having BD kids in the school. So I decided that I had to take this matter to the staff members and ask for their advice about how we should proceed.

In this section of the chapter we have introduced the three questions related to relevance, expertise and commitment that must be considered by the quarterback of school-based decision making.

If the answers to the three questions are "Yes," then a collaborative decision process such as the one used by Principal Mountjoy in "Deciding on Andrew's Classes" is called for. The decision is made by the teachers and others affected by the decision, either by majority vote or consensus.

Three different aspects of school-based decision making have converged in this section of the chapter:

- the three questions which enable us to understand each decision situation (relevance, expertise, commitment)
- the five decision-making strategies, each of which is an appropriate match for a particular decision situation, depending on the answers to the three questions which define each decision situation
- the quarterbacking role played by the school principal in ensuring that the right match is made between the decision-making strategy which is selected and the situation to which it is applied.

So far, we've emphasized the rational, analytical side of decision making. This is important — an understanding of these three key processes should help us improve the quality of decision making in our schools.

But there is another side to decision making — the human side of our work in schools — that we must bring in to complete our understanding of SBDM. We must study, if only briefly, the quality of the interpersonal relationships which exist in schools — and the history of success and failure of a staff's work together. Thus, we turn to the study of building collaborative school cultures that include staff, parents and the broader community.

Building a Collaborative School Culture

Our view is that the members of a school community cannot claim to be practising school-based decision making in an authentic way, unless their interpersonal relationships have such characteristics as the following:

- a genuine concern for the dignity of all members of the school community
- an expectation that all members of the school community have important contributions to make
- open communication and mutual influence
- encouragement of cooperation, creativity, self-direction, risk taking and mutual support
- trust as a fundamental characteristic of relationships throughout the school community.

School-based decision making involves the whole school community in teaching and learning in order to achieve high levels of student achievement. School-based decision making is a process through which major decisions are made at the school level about policies, instructional programs and services, and how funds are allocated to support them.

A school "community" means a school's students, their parents and other community-based support elements available to the school.

— School-Based Decision
Making, January 9, 1996
Alberta Education
Policy 1.8.2

The basis for a collaborative school culture is to be found in the beliefs of the principal, and in the way these beliefs are lived out in the principal's everyday acts.

A collaborative school culture has all of these characteristics, but our view is that its foundation is to be found in the trusting relationships which develop among members of the school community — trust between the principal and the teaching and support staff, between the school staff and the children, and between the school and the parents.

It All Begins with the Little Things

Principal Yaseyko talks about the long, slow process of building trust in a school:

As a principal, you have to believe in people making decisions. You have to live that with your staff, school council and with your parents. I don't think you can fake this.

The problem is that you had better be right most of the time because if you start making decisions for people and they are not the right decisions, that is when dissension sets in. The involvement of people in decisions has to be your daily practice.

The building of a collaborative school culture is a cumulative activity. By consistently consulting with staff, school councils and others on the little things which nevertheless are of concern to them, the principal over time empowers the whole school community.

The principal must be seen to be *with* the other members of the school community — to share in their work, to be in their midst, enjoying their company, thus symbolizing his commitment to the importance of what they are doing.

Site-based decision making really gets down to the little things. In any given day you get many telephone calls and the easiest thing to do is simply to say, "Yes, we will do that." It is more difficult to take down the number of the caller and go and see the teacher and say, "I got a call from Safety City and they were wondering if the Grade 3 class would be interested in participating." It is just a little thing and it probably only takes three or four minutes out of your day to go down and check with the teacher and parents reps first, rather than simply saying to the caller, "Yes, we will do that," and putting the memo in the teacher's mail box saying, "Please call Constable Such and Such because our Grade 3s are going to Safety City."

It must become a matter of course when you handle all those little things for you to consult with them — whether it be with the teachers, parents, the custodian or members of the support staff. It is these little things that create a climate so that people will come to you with questions. You have to continually empower people.

Establishing a Presence in the School

Principal Yaseyko talks about the importance of the principal being "present" in the school:

The principal needs to have a clear vision of where the school is going. I think that vision comes from a lot of different sources — who you are as a person, your reading of the community and their needs, the staff that you are working with, the factors that are imposed on you from above. How you go about your day-to-day business and communicate that conviction to members of your school community is critical. All the little day-to-day things that you do are critical in communicating your vision of what the school is all about.

As a principal, you can choose different ways of going about your work. I can go into my office and do principal-like tasks all day and not see a student, parent or staff member except when it is required. I can still justify my existence. To me, that is not what a principal is. What I found is that when I make an effort to go out into the school with the kids and staff, the better the school is.

How does one establish a presence in the school? There has to be a sense in the school that the principal is present, the administrator is there and the administrator is approachable.

Breaking the Relationship of Trust

a) Principal Mountjoy talks about the importance of being genuinely committed to collaboration when seeking the involvement of others in decision making:

In any decision-making process it will frustrate all of the people involved — whether it be students, parents or teachers — if you ask them for input and they go about their job in a meaningful, productive and professional manner, and bring back a report which you later return to them and say, "Do it again because you didn't give me what I wanted to hear." If that happens you have subverted the whole decision-making process, not only that particular process, but all future processes in which you might want to involve these people. It breaks that relationship of trust.

Don't go through the motions of the decision-making process and hope that the people whose involvement you have sought will tell you what you want to hear. We cannot do that in schools because people see through that quickly.

The principal sometimes faces a dilemma in decision situations where he has relevant information but may feel constrained in sharing it — let's say, in order to protect the interests of the student. There may be dangers in withholding information because, if this action is misunderstood, the relationship of trust is threatened.

b) Principal Mountjoy on the need for the principal to share information:

I think that the principal can inadvertently subvert the decision process by deciding not to give as much information to key groups as they need to do their job. You may assume that everyone has the information. Your decision not to provide all the information that you have as principal may interfere with or have a negative effect on the decision group.

c) Principal Yaseyko also talks about the sharing of information:

This may happen when you have a student coming into the school that has to be assigned to classes. You may have information about this student that you don't feel comfortable sharing with the staff as a whole. In fact, you may feel that having this information may influence the staff's willingness to take the particular student. This need-to-know concept is something that we have to deal with all the time. Sometimes, we have so much information that we forget to share it with people who need this information to make an informed decision. It is not deliberate on our part. We are not seeking to consciously subvert the decision making.

d) Principal Yaseyko cautions us about the dangers of casual comments by the principal:

Early in my first principalship, I recognized that even though I had not formally made a decision, nor intend to make one, if I let something casually slip out of my mouth, all of a sudden it was a "fait accompli" and people were upset. We would be talking about the need for a new lunchroom in a casual conversation and I might have said that room four would be a good location because it would be convenient and, my goodness, all of a sudden the kindergarten teacher was being moved. There was almost an uprising within half a day. I had to give repeated assurances that no decision had been made. As a teacher, you can sit at the staffroom table and say anything that you like, but as a principal, I quickly learned that you have to be a little cautious in what you say.

The Importance of Communication

a) Principal Yaseyko talks about the special importance of decisions regarding discipline:

When we consider all the decisions that we make as principals, probably the decisions that require the most care and attention in dealing with members of the teaching staff centre around kids and discipline. In terms of the day-to-day rigours of the principalship, those are the decisions that are potentially the most volatile. Those day-to-day student-teacher-parent decisions that the administrator has to make cause the most difficulties among staff — between staff

Discipline decisions require special care and attention because they can become areas for disagreement between staff and principal and undo efforts to build a collaborative school culture.

members and the administration and between administration and parents. I find myself walking a tightrope all the time because it is really difficult to get commitment from all three parties to the same course of action.

Over time, you can build all sorts of bridges with staff by the decisions that you make in running the school and then burn just as many bridges quickly if you get into a circumstance with a parent or student where the staff feels that you have sold them out. District pressures, pressures from Alberta Education, pressures from the *School Act* and your own personal philosophy about how to deal with such situations come to bear when you make discipline decisions. The staff may not be aware of these other pressures.

There are always extenuating circumstances in making discipline decisions and these are not always understood or appreciated by staff.

Your personal feelings toward kids and learning are the ones that really shine through in the school. Therein lies a bit of a difficulty — even though you can articulate your feelings about kids and learning for your teachers, not everyone is going to agree with you and they may feel they have good reasons for their disagreements. My feeling is that when we deal with students, discipline is an extension of the learning process. There are always extenuating circumstances. You find yourself in the position of being a judge and having to take those extenuating circumstances into account. Sure you can have a policy — if this happens, then you are suspended. Then you have the single mom on the phone saying, "I work from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and I have nowhere for Julia to go. If you send my daughter home for the suspension, she will be unsupervised for three days." Now you have to consider an in-school suspension because of these extenuating circumstances. But an in-school suspension in your policy may have been the consequence for a lesser offence which you've already imposed on Julia for an earlier incident. Now the teacher has sent the student to you on the understanding that the school policy says that if you swear at a teacher in the classroom, you are suspended from school.

The staff, other students and parents may not understand why the principal has backed off from implementing the letter of the school policy.

Let's suppose you decide that in these circumstances Julia should be given an in-school suspension. Everybody sees what you have done but they don't necessarily understand why you have done it. You can't convene a meeting of the staff and explain each individual circumstance. What you may have decided is that because the parent now clearly understands that this time we will work with her to accommodate her situation as a single parent, we as a school will have no choice should Julia break the school rules again, but to suspend her and send her home, whatever inconvenience that imposes upon the parent.

I find that when I make decisions regarding discipline, I will err on the side of the student or the parent, until I have learned that the student has clearly demonstrated an unwillingness to work with us at

There has to be room for judgment in the implementation of discipline policy.

the school. Some teachers feel that my approach to these decisions breeds permissiveness within the school that we simply can't tolerate. We should have a late policy for everyone and we should have this policy imposed to the letter with everyone. If only we would do this, then the students would fall in line. Teachers are probably right about that with 90 per cent of the students. With the other 10 per cent, their view might be that we should just throw them out. We really can't do that.

What we have to do is find an answer that will work for the 10 per cent who will not fit within our policies. This is where you have to find compromises. Then you have to work with staff to help them understand why you are doing what you are doing. If we have a day of reckoning with Julia and her mother, what does it matter if it is this week or next week? If we give the student a chance and her behaviour improves we don't have a problem, we win! We collectively win! The student wins, the parent wins and the teacher wins! If we try a compromise in our discipline and the behaviour does not improve, we can hold the student accountable later.

b) Principal Yaseyko talks about the importance of communication and trust in decision making:

If you have built up a relationship of trust, then teachers and parents are more likely to accept the decision you make in a difficult situation even if they disagree with the decision.

Communication is important throughout the decision-making process. The better we can communicate the need to make the decision, the parameters within which the decision was made, why we did what we did as a principal, and what some of the expected outcomes are, then the better off we will be. There are times when the principal must make the decision, because of the nature of the decision. Sometimes this has to do with your fundamental commitment regarding the direction of the school. When the principal has to make that hard decision, he or she has to hope that a high level of trust with the staff has been established. The decision may not be palatable, but if there have been enough instances in the past where you have been able to build trust with members of your staff, then they will likely accept your decision even if they do not agree with it.

This is true with school council members and parents in the community as well. If you have established a trusting relationship with your parent community, they will be more likely to accept your decisions. It is more difficult to build trust with the parent community because a lot of parents don't see you on a day-to-day basis and this is necessary for trust building to occur. A lot of parents don't see you at all or they may see you once a month at a school council meeting. Their perception of what is happening in the school is directly related to the number of problems they hear from their kids.

In summary, we place special emphasis on the following points in building a collaborative culture in schools:

- the relationship of trust between staff and principal is fundamental; building trust begins with the "little things"
- it is important to take the time to build consensus about the priority issues facing the school and a shared commitment to address those issues
- teachers and others involved in decision-making processes must be clear from the outset what is expected of them and what the constraints or parameters are for their involvement
- the principal must monitor the work of committees to ensure no surprises when the committees report
- the principal must be "present" and easily accessible to all members of the school community
- communication with staff about the reasons for hard decisions is vital.

Summary and Review

- There are five decision-making processes used in school-based decision making. They are all important and they are all legitimate and essential. The most important decisions in SBDM, however, are made by collaborative decision-making strategies.
- The principal quarterbacks SBDM. Teachers, parents, school councils, support staff members, committee members and students also play key roles in SBDM. Because of the way schools work (based on the *School Act* authority), the decision-making process requires a quarterback. In schools, this is the principal.
- Three questions — pertaining to relevance, expertise and commitment offer guidance to the principal as he or she quarterbacks the decision-making process. Constraints in the form of provincial legislation and school district policies will structure the resolution of particular decision issues; e.g., approval of the school budget, program improvement priorities and the school's staffing plan.
- SBDM is not only a matter of rational consideration of who makes what decision and how. The foundation of SBDM is trusting relationships among the members of the school community.

Individual — One person makes the decision without involving others.

Consultative — The person making the decision has discussions about different aspects with key individuals and then makes the decision.

Democratic — A group of people come together to discuss the situation, a recommendation is made and the group uses voting to decide. A majority vote determines the decision.

Collaborative — Input is gathered from different stakeholders; the situation is discussed; a group of people or individuals responsible make the decision based on the input.

Consensus — Stakeholders affected by the decision have the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process. The group continues to reach a compromise solution that all stakeholders can support. If a consensus is not reached, the decision is delayed.

• Determining "Who Makes What Decisions?" at the School

School-based decision making does not mean that everyone decides everything. Some decisions are best made by staff, other decisions should involve school councils, parents, students and the community. Some decisions are best made by an individual.

The article by Gordon McIntosh at the beginning of this chapter contains an analysis of decision-making models that includes individual decisions (often the principal), decisions made after consulting others and decisions made through collaboration or consensus. It is not possible or productive to list all the decisions made at the school, complete with the person(s) responsible and the process to be used. However, it is very useful to determine which decisions the staff and school council will be involved in and further to agree to the nature of the involvement — consultation, collaboration or consensus.

The definitions in the side bar are a starting point for the discussion about how decisions should be made. The process used is important.

The workshops found on pages 47–50 illustrates one process that might be used to decide "how to decide." It is important that the staff and school council review these decisions from time to time.

After the staff and school council have made a decision about what decisions they want to be involved in, consideration should be given to the structure that works in the school for decision making.

Models for School-Based Decision Making

Models for shared decision making can take many forms. A model can be a schematic of the process or structure for decision making, a set of bylaws describing process, a set of principles or a description of roles.

Collaborative or shared school-based decision making requires a redesign or reconceptualization of the culture of schools and the beliefs that support that culture. Often in the past, staff and parents were not involved in making critical decisions which affect teaching and learning at the school level. Staff need support and time to view this role as being as important as their classroom teaching role. Real change takes time. Real change in schools and in classrooms must be supported at provincial and district levels.

Decisions about the model for SBDM in schools often start at the jurisdiction level. Decisions about centralized and decentralized responsibilities including budgets are made using a collaborative process including all stakeholders. Roles and responsibilities (Chapter Four) are clearly defined, and terms and definitions should be determined collectively. District philosophy and policy reflects a commitment to and support for SBDM.

In order to be congruent with the concept of school-based decision making, any discussion about models must recognize the need for flexibility and the opportunity for each school to develop its own unique model within certain commonly agreed-upon parameters. Given the wide range of differences in school sizes and types, there can be no one model. However, there are certain characteristics that a model should exhibit.

Characteristics of an SBDM Model

- a process that benefits students and helps enhance teaching and learning
- a shared or collaborative decision-making structure in place at all levels, starting with the school jurisdiction and moving to the school and school committee levels
- a recognition that the authority to make a decision goes along with the responsibility for that decision
- a process whereby new roles and responsibilities are determined in a collaborative manner, and participants in the system come to understand and acknowledge the changed roles
- well-defined parameters which outline who decides what and what decision-making process should be used
- an environment that includes adequate resources for implementation such as time and funds for inservice activity, working committees and task forces that are identified as necessary for the SBDM model and process to work
- a goal-setting activity that sets out the focus for the school within the overall objective of improving the learning environment
- open communication structures and attitudes
- promotion of experimentation and risk taking
- an understanding that the budget process is driven by the vision and goals of the school and jurisdiction; the budget process must clarify centralized and decentralized responsibilities
- the use of appropriate subgroups (task forces or committees) in which the participants are those who are connected to the decision to be implemented.

> *Schools will require a more democratic approach to decision making, one that involves teachers in structured, meaningful ways. In a similar manner, the overall administration of school systems must become more facilitative. They must more clearly help teachers to do their jobs (rather than tell them how) by creating the necessary conditions in which teaching and learning can flourish.*
>
> *This model of schools and schooling should allow more effective decisions on the more specific issues which face schools, such as integration, individualization and student assessment. Decisions would be made at the classroom and school level — within the constraints of general provincial and school system policy, but in the light of the professional expertise of teachers, and the specific needs and situation of the school community. These informed, professional and collective decisions should also give more effective involvement to parents and should better meet the needs of our children.*
>
> *We need to develop structures in schools which ensure effective, ongoing staff involvement in the decisions that affect them.*
>
> — The Alberta Teachers' Association, *Trying to Teach: Necessary Conditions*
> 1994

Elements of a Model for Shared Decision Making at the School Level:

- a culture that promotes collaboration, cooperation and collegiality, and relies on a team approach to organization and solving problems
- based on a school education plan developed with input from school councils
- staff deciding which issues require a whole-staff decision as well as the process used to reach the decision (democratic vote, collaboration, consensus)
- a process for involving the school council in decisions about school policy
- structures which allow appropriate people to be involved in making decisions
- adopts a structure where the people closest to the decision and responsible for implementing the decision make the decision
- a budget process that allows involvement of staff and school council which is driven by the school education plan
- a process to determine areas where shared decision making will occur
- provision of time, support and preparation for the changing roles and responsibilities
- a process for constant evaluation and reporting on progress and school improvement.

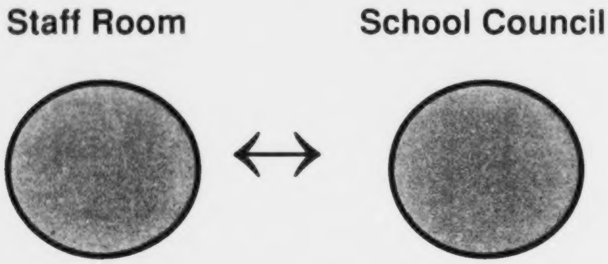
The chart below shows that 41.8 per cent of schools have 200 students or less (2–10 staff), and 72.7 per cent of the schools have 400 students or less. There will be major differences in decision-making structures (models) for schools with 5–10 staff as compared to schools with 30 staff or for those with 120 staff.

Student Enrolment	# of Schools	% of total
0 - 100	478	26.8
100 - 200	267	15.0
200 - 300	277	15.6
300 - 400	272	15.3
400 - 500	197	11.0
500 - 600	127	7.1
600 - 700	66	3.8
700 - 800	30	1.6
800 - 900	15	0.8
900 - 1000	10	0.6
1000 - 1900	41	2.3
1900 - 2300	3	0.0016
TOTAL	1783	100.0

Source: Alberta Education, Feb. 10, 1997.

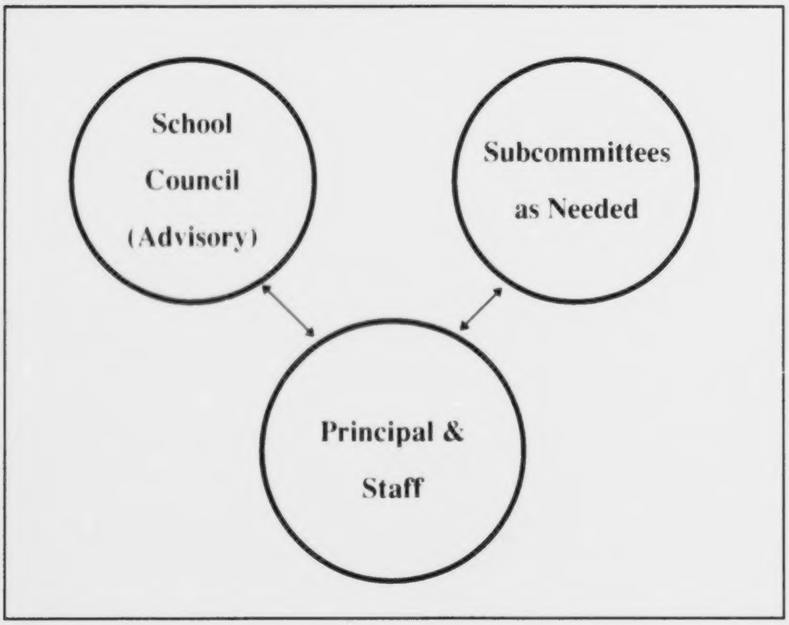
Example for a Small School

Often, the decision-making process takes place at the table in the staff room, where there is much informal discussion which includes all staff. These discussions are taken to, or often are initiated by, the school council which is also a small group.



There are few formal committees in a small school. Often individuals assume a leadership function and communication tends to be informal and ongoing.

Example for a Small Elementary School (6–10 Staff)



An organizational structure that looks collaborative does not mean that collaborative decision making will occur.

Staffs and committees must have a process that allows for open discussion and builds trust.

Committee members must have skills in
— Conflict resolution
— Trust building
— Team building
— Listening
— Problem solving.

As the number of staff increases, there is a need for more formal structures and committees.

A junior high may have curriculum teams (math, science) and broader committees (PD, school improvement plans etc.) that make specific decisions that relate to their areas.

The size of the school often determines the number of committees.

Communication between committees is important.

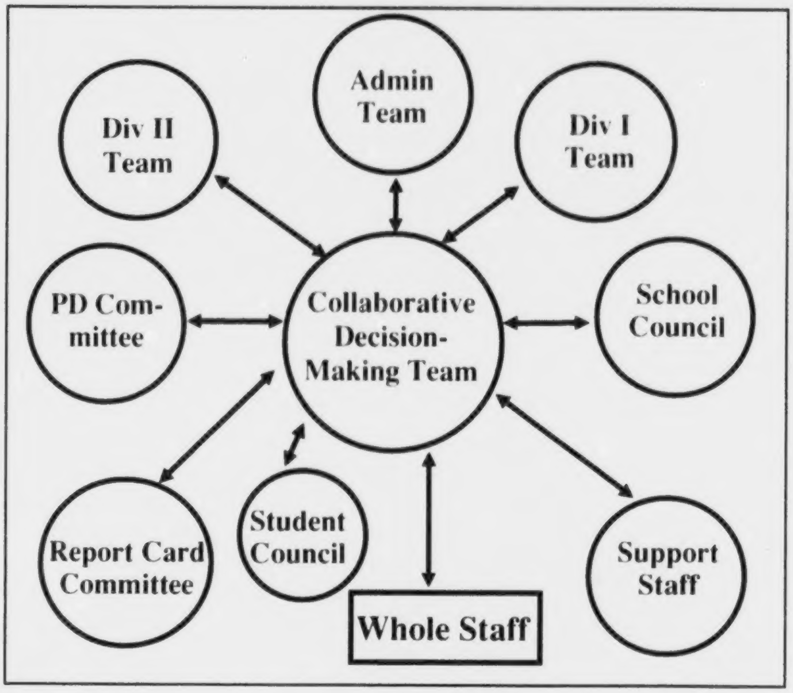
It is important to note the critical role of the school council. The school council is advisory and consultative to the principal and the school board.

Some decisions are made at the committee or team level and communicated to the decision-making team.

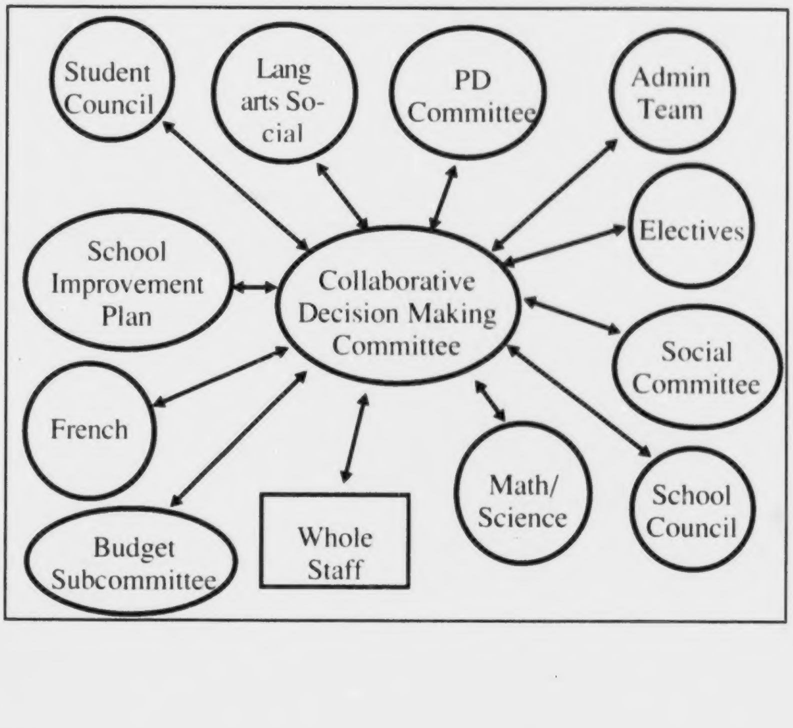
The central decision-making team or committee has representation from all other teams and committees. This group makes decisions about which committee is responsible for an action and may make decisions that involve several areas.

Some decisions (discipline policy, reporting procedure, school focus) are whole staff decisions made with consultation on and advice from the school council.

Example from a Larger Elementary School (20–30 Staff)



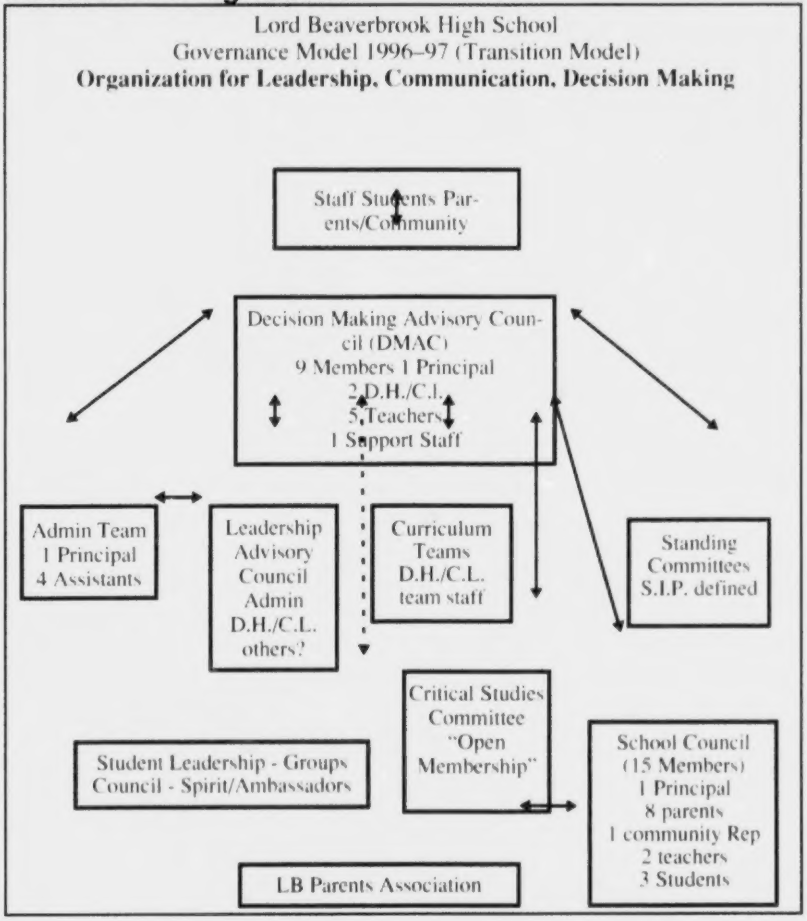
Example from a Junior High School



SBDM Practices in Alberta: Lord Beaverbrook High School, Calgary School District No. 19

Joe Frank, Principal

Model from a High School


Lord Beaverbrook High School
Governance Model 1996–97 (Transition Model)
Organization for Leadership, Communication, Decision Making
Staff Students Parents/Community
Decision Making Advisory Council (DMAC)
9 Members 1 Principal
2 D.H./C.L.
5 Teachers
1 Support Staff
Admin Team
1 Principal
4 Assistants
Leadership Advisory Council
Admin
D.H./C.L.
others?
Curriculum Teams
D.H./C.L.
team staff
Standing Committees
S.I.P. defined
Critical Studies Committee
"Open Membership"
Student Leadership - Groups
Council - Spirit/Ambassadors
School Council
(15 Members)
1 Principal
8 parents
1 community Rep
2 teachers
3 Students
LB Parents Association

As the examples and models found on pages 27–41 indicate, the size and grade composition of the school are determining factors in establishing a decision-making structure. Some schools have Grades ECS to Grade 12 and this will mean a different structure than an ECS to Grade 6 or ECS to Grade 9 school.

It is important that schools have the flexibility to develop a structure that will suit the needs of their school community.

This model is the Governance Model for Lord Beaverbrook High School in Calgary. Beaverbrook has 2,276 students, 128 teachers and a total staff of 150.

In many high schools, department committees make major curriculum-related decisions

Teams such as planning, budget and professional development have representation from all the departments.

Issues are presented to the decisison-making advisory council (DMAC) for referral to other groups or for decision.

The school council is advisory and consultative to the principal and the DMAC.

SBDM Practices In Alberta: Wilma Hansen Junior High, Calgary School District No. 19

Jim Gibson, Assistant Principal

Wilma Hansen is a junior high school in the Calgary School District. It has 645 students including 212 in Grade 7, 238 in Grade 8 and 195 in Grade 9.

What We Did in Our School

The model is one which has evolved over a long period of time. The influence of different principals has allowed this model to evolve. This particular model is one which I "walked into" but have found to be a democratic process.

Benefits in the Process

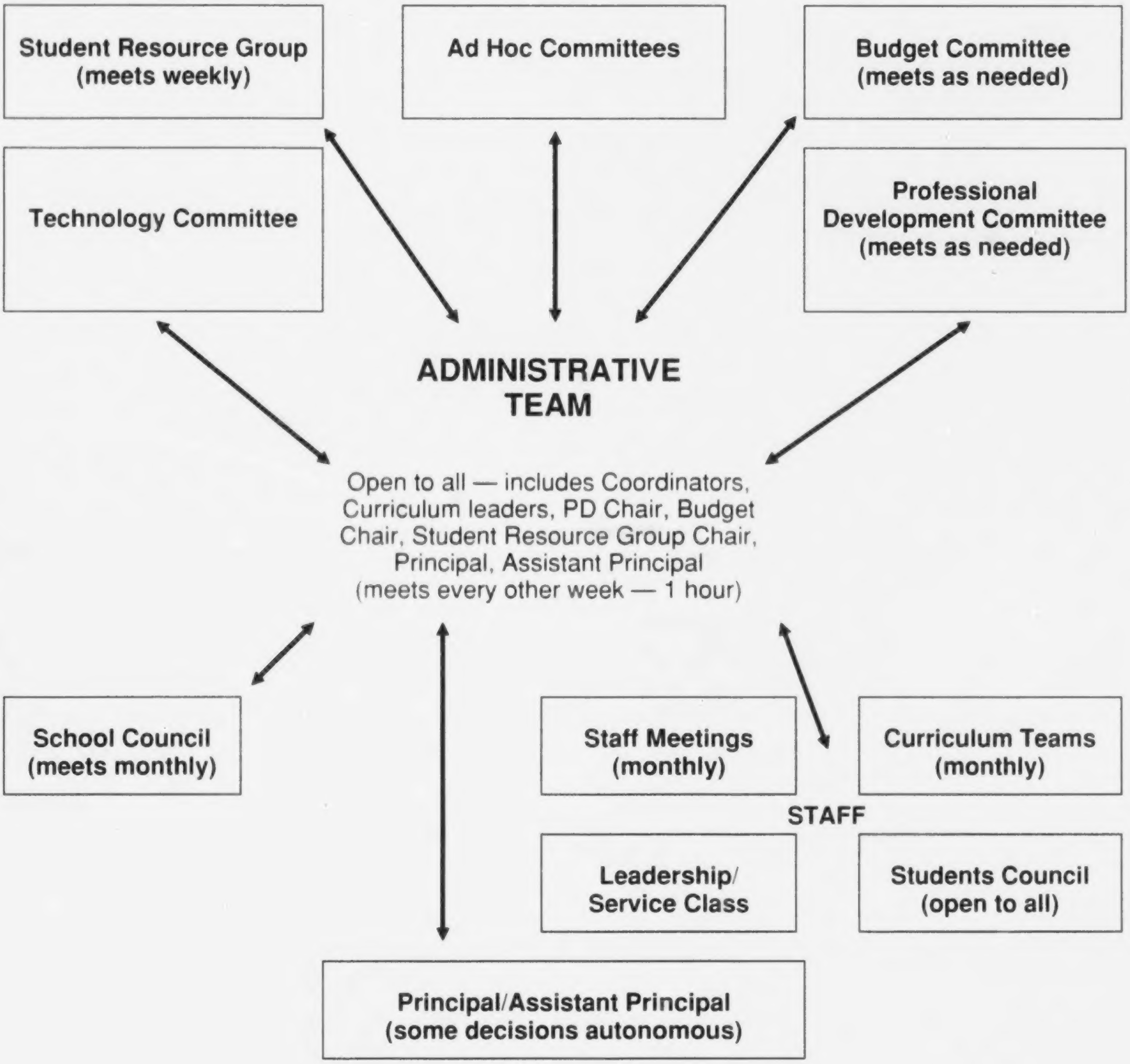
The strength of this model is the input that staff members have in most decisions made in the school. The staff of Wilma Hansen has embraced this model, continued to shape it and constantly looks for a better way.

What Would We Do Differently

The staff members who have been at Wilma Hansen since its opening are the greatest advocates for this model because their input was not always requested or desired. Since their input has become valued and used, they do not want to give up their responsibility in the decision-making process. As new staff come to the school, they seem pleased to feel valued and find their voices can make a difference. Knowing how this model has evolved from crisis to current reality through input from the stakeholders, I cannot see anything in particular that I would change.

DECISION-MAKING MODEL

Wilma Hansen Junior High
March 1997


Student Resource Group (meets weekly)
Ad Hoc Committees
Budget Committee (meets as needed)
Technology Committee
Professional Development Committee (meets as needed)
ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM
Open to all — includes Coordinators, Curriculum leaders, PD Chair, Budget Chair, Student Resource Group Chair, Principal, Assistant Principal (meets every other week — 1 hour)
School Council (meets monthly)
Staff Meetings (monthly)
Curriculum Teams (monthly)
STAFF
Leadership/ Service Class
Students Council (open to all)
Principal/Assistant Principal (some decisions autonomous)

SBDM Practices In Alberta: Mitford Middle School Rocky View School Division No. 41

Dorothy Kristensen, Principal

Mitford Middle School in Cochrane is in the Rocky View School Division.

There are 430 students in Grades 5–8.

Definition

School-based decision making (SBDM) at Mitford Middle School is a process whereby decisions are made involving various stakeholders (where appropriate) to facilitate effective, meaningful change that enhances teaching and learning in support of our vision.

Our "Made in Mitford Model" is founded on the following beliefs and guiding principles:

- Our primary focus is on the learner and the learning process.
- When the appropriate stakeholders are involved, our decisions will be more effective and meaningful.
- Those stakeholders responsible for a decision and/or its implementation should have the opportunity to be involved.
- Not every stakeholder has to be involved in every decision. Involvement is based on urgency, need, interest, time and impact on the classroom.
- Those who choose not to be involved in our decision-making process should support the decision made.
- Decisions must be made in accordance with legislation and Rocky View School Division policy.

Issues Which Take the Non-Consultative Track

- Alberta Education policy or Rocky View School Division policy
- emergent situations
- personnel decisions

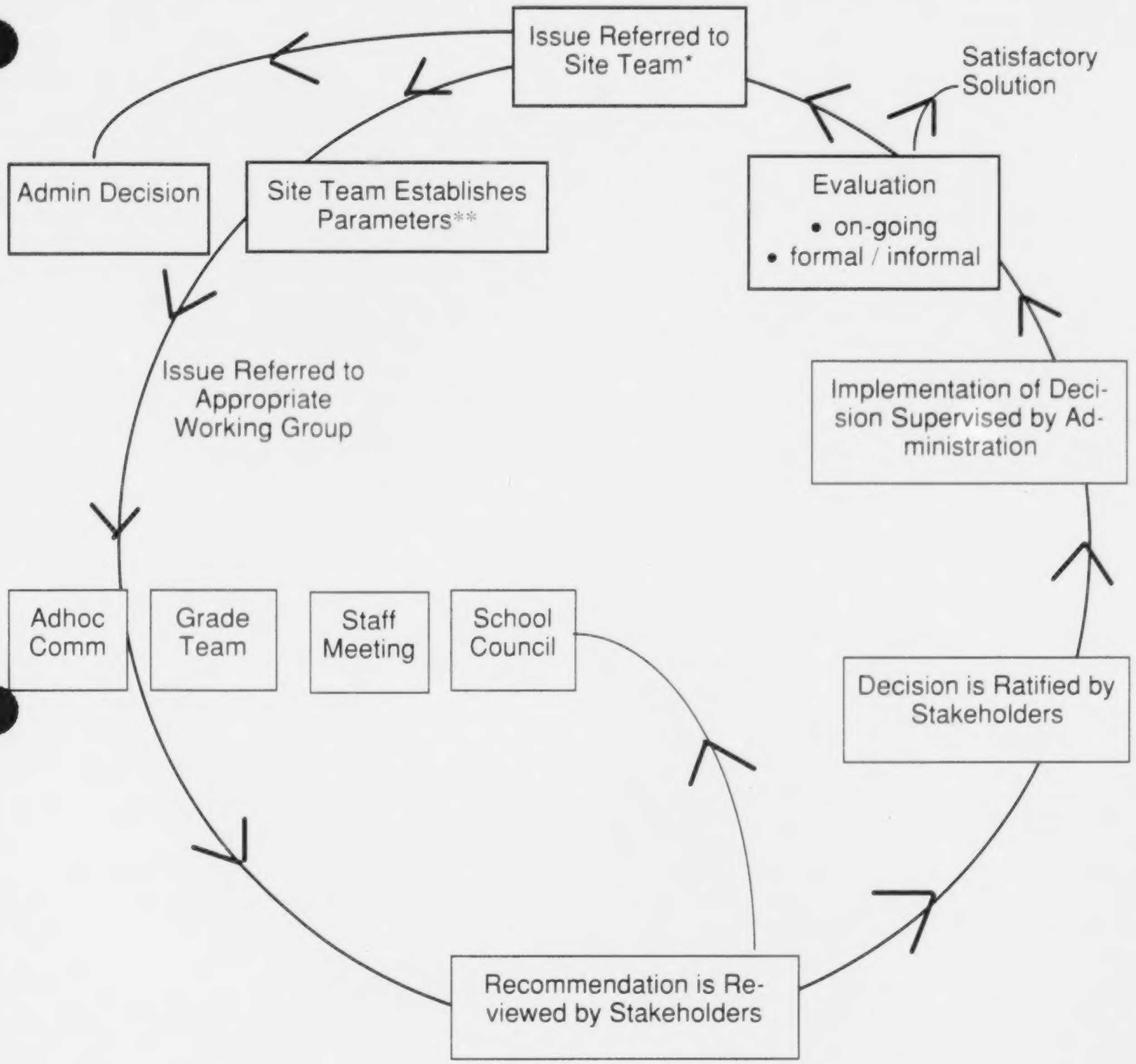
Site Team Makeup

The site team consists of the following people:

- the principal or designate
- one school council member
- one support staff member
- two teachers — one from team 7/8 and one from team 5/6.

When anyone has an issue that requires an SBDM decision, they may present it to the site team for resolution.

217


Issue Referred to Site Team*
Satisfactory Solution
Admin Decision
Site Team Establishes Parameters**
Evaluation
• on-going
• formal / informal
Issue Referred to Appropriate Working Group
Implementation of Decision Supervised by Administration
Adhoc Comm
Grade Team
Staff Meeting
School Council
Decision is Ratified by Stakeholders
Recommendation is Reviewed by Stakeholders

***Site Team Membership**

- Principal or Designate
- School Council Rep
- Support Staff Rep
- Teacher (Gr. 7/8) Rep
- Teacher (Gr. 5/6) Rep

**** Parameters**

- Clarify the Issue
- Identify the Stakeholders (Including those responsible for implementation)
- Outline Task for Working Group
- Develop Timeline
- Provide Other Relevant Information

SBDM Practices In Alberta: Hawkwood School,

Calgary School District No. 19

Barbra Flath, Principal

Hawkwood is an Elementary School in the Calgary School District. The 700 students are enrolled in ECS to Grade 6.

Vision Statement

Openness
Trust
Respect
Care
Positive Role Models
Safety and Security
The Celebration of Learning
Independence
and Self -Directedness
Intellectual Freedom
Diversity/Flexibility
The Honoring of Potential
Life-Long Learning

Background

In September 1997, Hawkwood School will be four years old, however we are just in our second year as a large elementary school of 700 students, as the school was built in two stages. The decision-making structure changed as we have grown larger but from the beginning there has been a focus on collaboration and joint decision making. Our Hawkwood School vision statement reflects this.

We have an open door and encourage and value the voices of all stakeholders in the school community. Collaboration is very much a part of Hawkwood School in all our work and decision making as a staff and with parents. We have many people to involve in the decision-making process: 700 students, 34 teachers, 525 families, 12 Calgary Board of Education support staff and 10 parent lunchroom staff.

The model is one way to picture how we organize and make decisions at Hawkwood. It is important to say that the way in which we work and make decisions together is continually evolving.

School Administration

Hawkwood School's formal administration consists of the school principal, assistant principal and two curriculum leaders. We meet for breakfast regularly. Few decisions are made in this group but often we discuss how we will handle the decisions that need to be made.

Decisions which are made by the administration follow consultation with staff and parents. Some decisions, such as timetabling, establishing team partners and determining room allocation require a complete "big picture" and there is often confidential information involved. Ultimate responsibility for the school rests with me, so many decisions affecting the whole school are okayed through me. This is actually more of an informing process; it is important for the principal to know what is going on throughout the school so that I can assist with coordination and can support people in their efforts. At times, however, changes need to be made to plans due to regulations or other information unknown to the staff, or perhaps when something is in conflict with the general philosophy of the school.

Staff Council Structures

- Monthly staff meetings are attended by all staff. Parent lunchroom staff are requested to participate. Decision making which occurs at these meetings is minimal and usually involves the approval of plans developed through cross-school discussions and Tuesday administration meetings. If staff do not approve a given plan, minor changes may be made as a large group or else it goes to the next Tuesday administration meeting or to cross-school discussion. Voting is used for simple issues such as choosing the best night for the Christmas party.
- Cross-school discussion groups meet at least once a month. All staff members are in one of four cross-school discussion groups. Each group has representation from the various grade levels, specialists, administration. Usually only teachers meet; however, depending upon the topics of discussion, support staff and/or lunchroom staff may be asked to attend; e.g., behavioral expectations for students. Achieving consensus is the goal of most items discussed in these groups.
- Tuesday administration meetings are held over the noon hour and are attended by the formal administration as well as the rotating chairs from each cross-school discussion group. Also, any staff member who wishes to attend is welcome. The agenda is presented in the Monday morning memo. Topics for discussion may be raised by one of the chairs or may come from their cross-school discussion group, but usually the topics come from the administrative team. Topics for discussion include:
    - how to disseminate information or deal with requests for information or input from the school
    - development of tentative plans after gaining input from staff
    - collating of information
    - solving problems
    - determining agendas.

Student Council

Student council membership consists of 12 Division II students, one from each Division II class and one from each of the student leadership groups; i.e., patrols, PE leaders, office/lunchroom assistants. Students represent their own classes as well as a Division I team. Students bring the ideas, initiatives, problems and concerns from classes to student council meetings.

Student council meetings are regularly scheduled once a month. Students make decisions on items which are within their control and/or discuss how to elicit assistance for decisions which they cannot make. Consensus is the goal in decision making.

Committees

Numerous committees work on behalf of our school. Each committee works towards consensus in making decisions that they are then responsible for. All staff are involved in at least one staff/parent committee and most of these are chaired by parents. When utilizing committees, we must trust in the work of these people to do the job for us and appreciate their efforts. If we are not satisfied, we need to be on the committee. Also, it is expected that everyone will support the people on the committees in their work. As the ultimate responsibility for decisions and for what is going on in the school rests with principal, committee chairs keep in close contact with me so that I am informed, knowledgeable and able to ensure a congruent philosophy.

School Council

Hawkwood School has a strong, involved parent community. Therefore, we also have an active school council and school council executive. Our detailed school constitution, which was developed by a group of parents and staff and was ratified in school council, includes decision-making processes, means for conflict resolution, and roles and responsibilities of the school council, school council executive and committees.

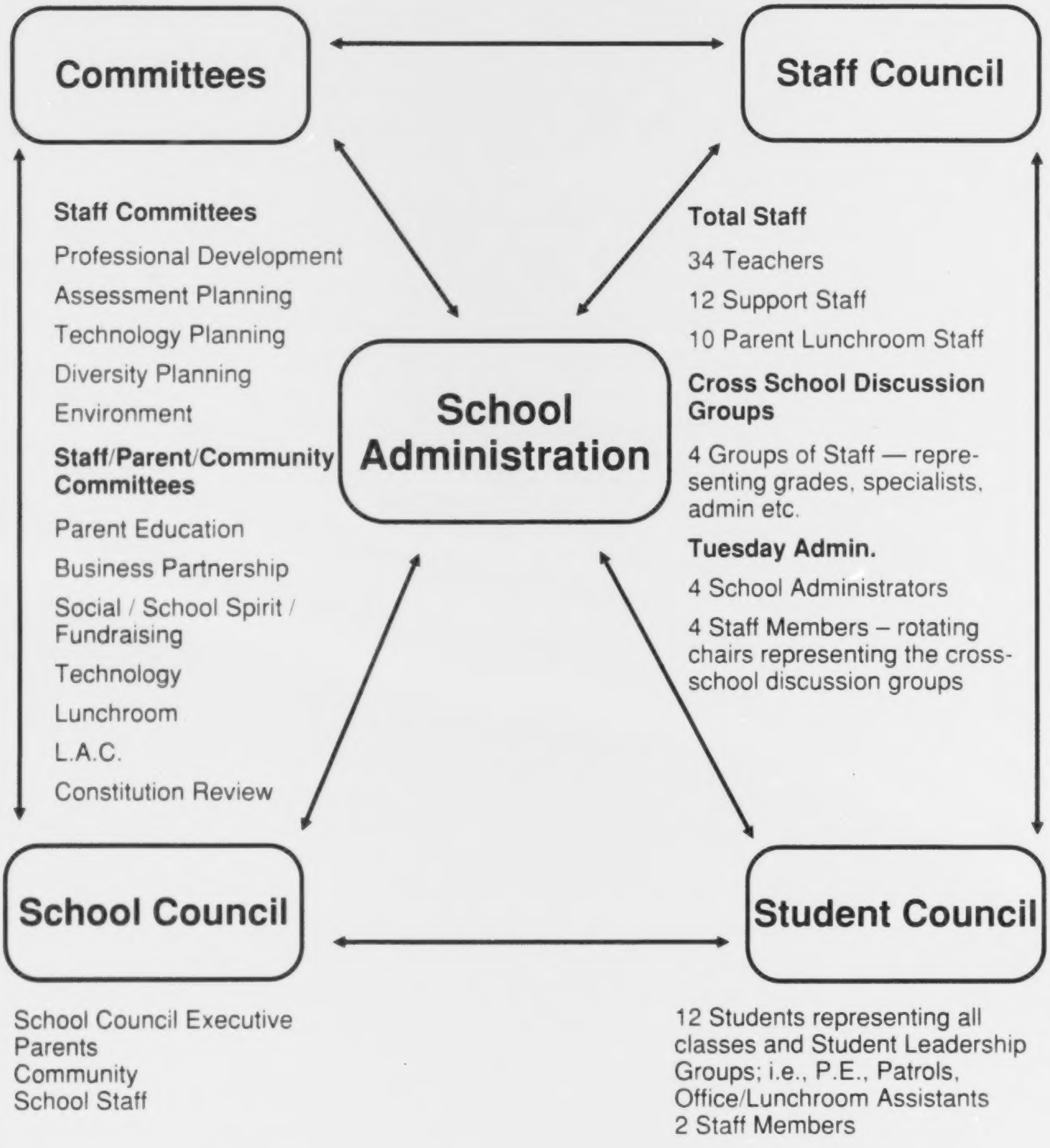
Our school council executive consists of 13 members: nine parents, three staff and one community representative, who work toward consensus. They make decisions regarding how to handle items of new business and provide advice to the principal.

Our school council meetings are usually attended by approximately 25–30 people, although this can vary significantly. The agenda is published in the monthly newsletter so people are well informed. School council meetings follow "Robert's Rules of Order" and decisions are voted upon through a show of hands or, in the case of the election of executive members, through secret ballot.

As is directed by Section 15 of the *School Act*, school councils and school council executives have an advisory role.

Decision Making at Hawkwood School

"The Way We Do Things"



Staff Committees

Professional Development

Assessment Planning

Technology Planning

Diversity Planning

Environment

Staff/Parent/Community Committees

Parent Education

Business Partnership

Social / School Spirit / Fundraising

Technology

Lunchroom

L.A.C.

Constitution Review

Total Staff

34 Teachers

12 Support Staff

10 Parent Lunchroom Staff

Cross School Discussion Groups

4 Groups of Staff — representing grades, specialists, admin etc.

Tuesday Admin.

4 School Administrators

4 Staff Members – rotating chairs representing the cross-school discussion groups

School Council Executive
Parents
Community
School Staff

12 Students representing all classes and Student Leadership Groups; i.e., P.E., Patrols, Office/Lunchroom Assistants
2 Staff Members

Duchess School in Brooks is in the Grasslands Regional Division.

It is a Grade 1–12 school with 358 students.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Duchess School, Brooks, Grasslands Regional Division No. 6

Martin Shields, Principal

Overview of the Model

The Duchess School site-based management (SBM) consists of three distinct groups: our site-based management team, our staff and our school council. Parents and staff members have the opportunity to share and discuss their feelings once a month in staff meetings and school council meetings. These provide all individuals with the opportunity to meet and many good ideas have been brought forward.

The site-based management team consists of three elected parents, both administrators and four teachers (one from each of the four divisions — primary, elementary, junior high and high school). Both the parents and teachers are elected in alternate years to ensure stability within the group. Parents are responsible for reporting to school council, and teachers are responsible for reporting to staff. Although the site-based management committee is involved in the big decisions within the school, the principal is still ultimately responsible.

The site-based management team has four sub-committees:

- students and learning
- teachers and teaching
- budget
- infrastructure (physical building, technology, etc.).

These four subcommittees include teachers, support staff, students and parents. At least one member of the site-based management team is required to sit on one of these four committees as a liaison and as a communication link between the subcommittees.

Each of these four groups decided on three goals they would deal with during this school year. Although time to work on these goals was provided through PD days, some after-school hours were also used to work on the various projects.

We have now had a year of experience with this model and are in the process of evaluating its effectiveness. Following are some thoughts on site-based management from each of the representative groups on the site-based management team.

Parents

Duchess School has always valued parent participation and meaningful work with the school. The school is seen as an integral part of our community and there is pride and ownership in the success of the school and our students. Parent volunteers have always been involved in hands-on activities with students.

SBM provides a mechanism where we can participate in the decision-making process as part of the team. It also provides the opportunity for teachers and parents to reach mutual understanding of each other's roles.

Unfortunately, SBM and equity-based funding were introduced at the same time and there is the perception that these are one and the same. SBM is not responsible for the amount of money allocated to our school but we have to deal with the consequences of a decreased budget. SBM needs to be better defined and have more support from leadership in central office.

We, as parents, see the role of SBM evolving and the work becoming more meaningful as our roles become better defined and expanded. We are developing mutual trust, respect and understanding within the school community for the betterment of our students' learning.

Teachers

Initially there was frustration felt by the teachers as a result of not knowing exact expectations and goals. As we have gone through the process and become focused on specific issues (such as the development of the three-year plan) this frustration has lessened to a great degree.

There has been a sense of camaraderie among all members — staff, administration and parents. The common goal seems to be the betterment of the school.

A concern is the maintenance of continuity in the group while at the same time allowing for movement of members to avoid burnout and encourage new ideas. A second concern is to have members recognize that the SBM group is a discussion group which provides input along with the various groups within the team. People who do not recognize this and want to be in control are not good candidates for this team.

In conclusion, we feel this has been a positive experience and see it as an important part of the school. It has provided a forum where we could provide ideas and concerns as well as receive feedback.

Administration

We have worked for many years with parents and staff in a variety of situations. This year, we had the opportunity to work in a new setting. The administrative team is made up of a vice-principal of four years in the Duchess School and a new principal to the Duchess School this September. There were four teachers chosen by staff and three parents elected by school council.

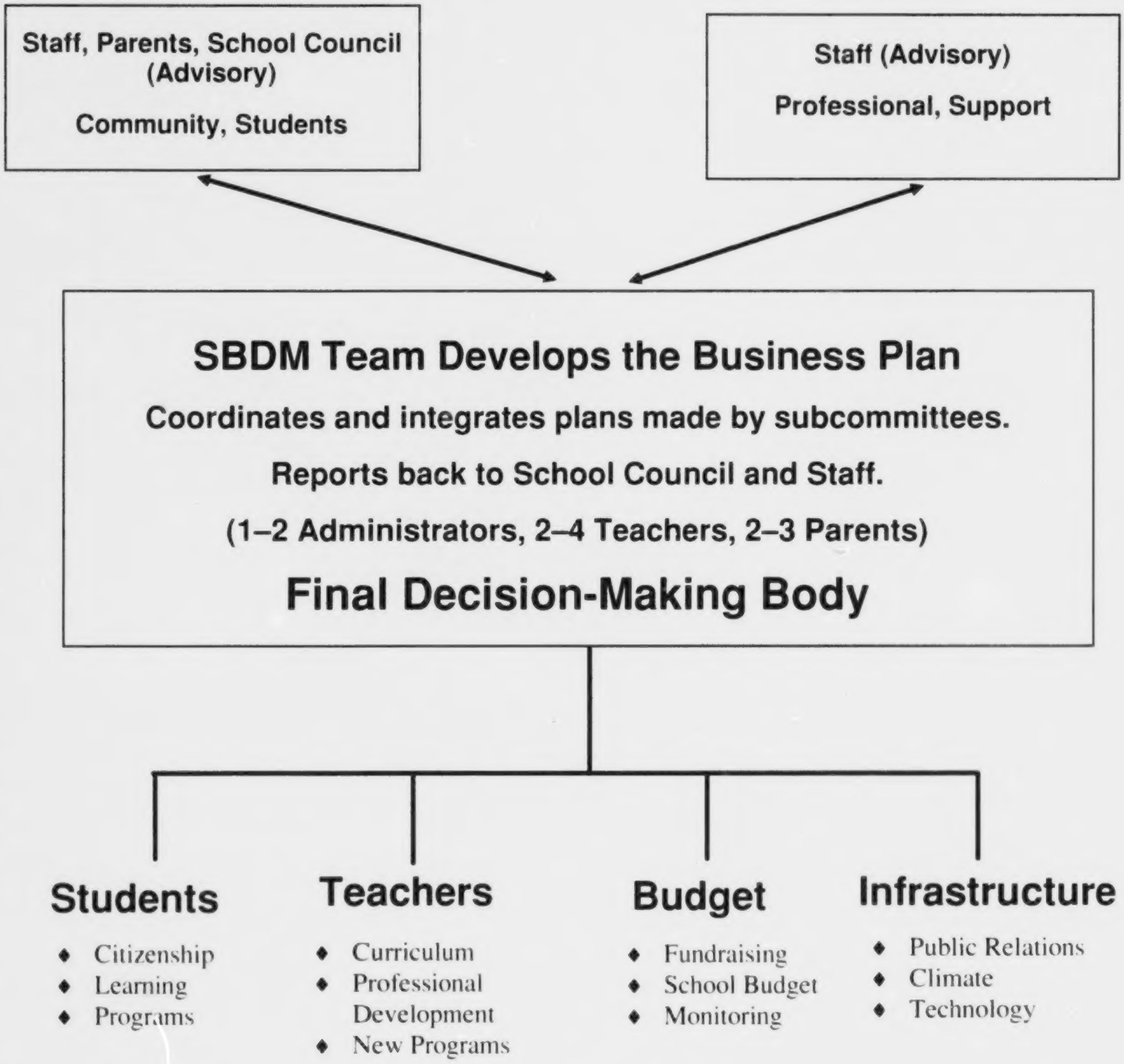
It became evident that all those at the table wanted to make a difference and were committed to improving and supporting the school. They were also busy people whose time was valuable and could not be wasted.

The first meetings were interesting, like the story of the Blind Men and the Elephant. We found the administration providing too much of the leadership. We had meetings with both parent and teacher members of the committee. Better lines of communication were developed. We needed to listen. It took this first couple of months for a trust relationship to grow as there was a new principal as well. Both groups began to express their opinions and frustrations. "Where are we going?" was still a concern. The administration was able to involve more committee members in taking an active role and providing leadership.

The positive nature of the committee has had significant and positive effects on the four other major SBDM committees. The parents provided leadership with the staff and other parents who were involved in the specific goals of these committees. This was a significant contribution. The parents provided to the community a positive link to the school and provided more avenues for information to flow both ways.

There is a concern that SBDM is just a passing phase in education and the committees will disappear as the next fad arrives. We have involved parents and staff, and have convinced them that SBDM is important, but we did this without a clear picture of roles and mandate. This must change or SBDM will die. This is the challenge for administration. We must provide positive leadership and opportunities for this committee to continue to clarify roles and then to move on to make a greater contribution. It can happen, but it takes time and a commitment to shared decision making. This means a change in the traditional leadership role of administration.

Duchess School Decision-Making Model



Staff, Parents, School Council (Advisory)

Community, Students

Staff (Advisory)

Professional, Support

SBDM Team Develops the Business Plan

Coordinates and integrates plans made by subcommittees.

Reports back to School Council and Staff.

(1–2 Administrators, 2–4 Teachers, 2–3 Parents)

Final Decision-Making Body

Students

- Citizenship
- Learning
- Programs

Teachers

- Curriculum
- Professional Development
- New Programs

Budget

- Fundraising
- School Budget
- Monitoring

Infrastructure

- Public Relations
- Climate
- Technology

> *Each school board shall develop, keep current, and implement written policy and procedures for school-based decision making consistent with provincial policy and procedures. These shall be a matter of public record, available upon request.*
>
> *School board policy and procedures for school-based decision making shall:*
> *be applicable to all schools in the jurisdiction but provide for the flexible approaches of school-based decision making; identify the types of decisions expected to be made at the school level; define the roles, responsibilities and relationships with a broad focus on broad distribution of power and authority for decision-making among all participants: principal, teachers, instructional support staff, parents, school councils, the community, central office and the board of trustees.*
>
> — School Based Decision Making Provincial Policy 1.8.2
> January 9, 1996

Centralized and Decentralized Decisions

All school communities must operate within the provincial laws and regulations which govern them, the school board policies, the regulations of the board of trustees and the existing contracts which are in force. In *School Based Management: A Detailed Guide for Successful Implementation*, Richard Neal cautions school jurisdictions that it is counterproductive to embark upon decentralized management by dictating all the things that can or cannot be done by schools.

The process of determining "who makes what decision" must be collaborative in nature and is essentially a negotiation process between schools and the centralized parts of the jurisdiction. There are many tasks to be sorted out, some of which no one wants to do, some of which are sought after hotly and many of which are easily decided.

This process must be grounded in the vision and goals that have been determined by a collaborative process which includes all partners.

Over the past two years in most jurisdictions teams of administrators representing schools and central office have been working out how responsibilities will be divided. The process of agreeing upon ground rules and then negotiating decisions has taken many forms. The use of external facilitators and the samples of shared best practices from other jurisdictions has enabled groups to proceed successfully. In other jurisdictions, private consultants guided the process in which a jurisdiction's stakeholders delineated the types of decisions to be delegated or centralized. Almost all jurisdictions began the work with administrators involved. Other stakeholders were included as time and resources permitted. In some jurisdictions, all groups were represented in working teams from the beginning.

Several lists follow which are the results of this decision-making process.

SBDM Practices in Alberta:

Samples of Decision-Making Responsibilities: Fort Saskatchewan RCSSD No. 104

Jim Sheasgreen, Superintendent

Decisions that Would Be Made at the Local School Level:

- determining school priorities based on an assessment of the educational needs of students and subject to school district policy, regulations and directives
- establishing budget priorities to ensure that students in the school can meet the educational objectives set by the school district
- determining staffing patterns to best meet the educational needs of students
- developing specific instructional methods that will be most effective in helping students achieve school district and provincial curriculum objectives
- determining the best use of instructional space
- selecting instructional materials most appropriate to the needs of students in the school
- establishing relationships with parents and members of the surrounding community
- hiring candidates for certain staff job vacancies
- deciding which supplies to order
- developing procedures governing field trips and extracurricular programs
- transportation: extracurricular, co-curricular, field trips, athletics
- communications: copy machines, telephone, fax, postage and supplies and materials related to same
- substitute teachers: short term (up to and including three consecutive days)
- instructional capital items: purchases, repairs and maintenance
- advertising for school-related matters other than the recruitment of staffing
- professional development.

Decisions that Would Be Made at the School District Level:

- board operations and central office operations
- coordination within the school district: programs, curriculum, evaluation
- evaluation: system, programs, schools
- maintenance, repairs and construction of buildings
- hiring of certain staff as per school board policy
- advertising: recruitment of staff, school district items
- contractual obligations
- custodial personnel and cleaning supplies
- substitute teachers: long term (more than three consecutive days)
- transportation to/from class
- utilities: water, sewer, natural gas, power
- approval of, and setting of, fees
- debenture costs
- insurance costs
- school district instructional support (1.2 per cent for 1996–97; 0.8 per cent for 1997–98).

Decisions that Would Be Shared Between School and School District:

- hiring of certificated staff
- school-year calendar
- hours/minutes of instruction and structure of the school day
- contracted services
- implementation and provision of special needs programs
- developing new programs to meet the needs of students in the school.

Northern Lights School Division No. 69

Ed Wittchen, Superintendent

Instructional Block: School Responsibility

Certified staff costs:
Substitutes (Leaves) ≤ 3 days
Principal Designate Allowances
Support Staff Costs
PUF Staff Costs
Advertising for Staff Costs
Increased Staff Costs Resulting From Negotiations, increments, training, ERIP leaves, sub days > 3 days: all are worked into the total figure for average staff costs
Transportation Costs: ECS–Grade 12 Field Trips, Extra & Curricular, Registration, Insurance, Repairs to Vehicles.
Communications: Telephone, fax, copying, postage
Capital (Instruction)
Repairs of Instructional Equipment
Instructional Program Resources
Library Resources
Instructional Supplies
Special Education Programming
ECS Extra Hours
Home Education Monitoring and Supplies

Instructional Block: Central Responsibility

Administrator Allowances
Advertising for Administrators
CANCOPY
Native Education Programs
Mossleigh Project
Professional Improvement Leaves
Special Education Severe Category
Contingency for late arrivals — programming
Instructional Media Centre
Alberta Assessment Consortium
Employee Assistance Program
Student Awards/Employee Recognition Programs
System Planning Testing Resources, Video Journal, Leadership Initiatives, Don Green, Contract Services, Instructional Initiatives — Internet, telephone lines, system technology program
Computer Technician Salary, Benefits, Equipment, Travel, Hardware, Software
Electronic Data Manager plus hardware and software
Emergency Contingency deductibles
Communications Program

Wolf Creek Regional Division No. 32 Responsibilities of Partners

Lyle Lorenz, Superintendent

Schools

- Teaching and learning
- Annual education plan
- Annual school budget
- Annual results report
- Programs and services
- Process ("how-to's")
- Personnel recruitment
- Safe and orderly environment
- Professional development
- Support staff evaluation
- Teacher evaluation
- Teacher enhancement
- Teacher assistance
- School council
- Differentiated school year calendar

Student

Board of Education

- Stewardship
- School system policies
- Three-year education plan
- School system budget
- Budget allocations to schools
- School-year calendar
- School system capital plan
- Annual results report
- Advocacy
- Bus transportation system
- Operations and maintenance
- Liaison with education partners
- Student review process
- Appeals
- Recruitment of senior administrative staff
- Recruitment of school-based administrators
- Lobbying

Central Office

- Uphold the *School Act*
- Implement provincial policies and regulations
- Ensure that students have the opportunity to meet standards of education set by the Minister
- Assist the board in fulfilling its responsibilities
- Implement board policies
- Administrative handbooks
- Educational leadership
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Liaison with education partners
- Instructional support services at the request of schools
- Business/financial services
- Appeals and conflict resolution
- Support/service centre for working in partnership with schools

Purpose: to discuss the continuum of decision-making approaches

to participate in an activity to decide who decides

to make decisions about decision making in schools.

Materials: sets of decision cards, chart paper, pens

Time: 1.5– 2 hours

Approaches to Decision Making

Presentation of a continuum of decision-making approaches. Encourage participants to give specific examples of real decisions for each approach.

Individual Consultative Democratic Collaborative Consensus

Card Sort Activity

Each small group is given a set of cards on which typical school-based decisions are printed. Deal out the cards.

Participants are asked to decide by consensus into which category on the continuum each card fits. Review the consensus process.

Options — The decisions may be printed in a chart format and participants first make an individual decision as to the location on the continuum. Next, they move to a group consensus. A sample list is provided. The list may be modified to suit the situation in the school.

The cards may be modified to suit the specific school.

Individual — One person makes the decision without involving others.

Consultative — The person making the decision has discussions about different aspects with key individuals and then makes the decision.

Democratic — A group of people come together to discuss the situation. A recommendation is made and the group uses voting to decide. A majority vote determines the decision.

Collaborative — Input is gathered from different stakeholders; the situation is discussed; a group of people or individuals responsible make the decision based on the input.

Consensus — Stakeholders affected by the decision have the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process. The group continues to reach a compromise solution that all stakeholders can support. If a consensus is not reached, the decision is delayed.

Note: This process should be repeated on a regular basis — perhaps once a year, and certainly if there is a large staff or school council turn-over.

In this validation process it would be appropriate to use only the "problem" cards.

This process is effective when used with groups of staff and parents working together.

Debrief this activity using the following questions:

- What made this process difficult? Why?
- What helped the process?
- Were there any cards that you could not decide by consensus?
- What did you learn about consensus during the process?
- Which was the largest pile? The smallest? What does this tell us? Why? How many should be in the "Consensus Pile"?

Analysis of the Card Sort

Examine the cards in each category. Describe the common characteristics for each. Discuss in the whole group.

Handout #2, found on page 50, was developed by teachers in Mountrose School in Grande Prairie. It is an example of the possible analysis.

This step is very important. Which issues does the whole staff want to decide? What are the characteristics of this set of decisions? If you know this you will know where to place "new" decisions as they arise.

Application

The group next uses the analysis to establish a decision-making model for the school.

- Which issues should be decided by whole staff consensus?
- Which policy issues need to be established? How?
- What committees or teams are needed? Which decisions are delegated to them?
- How will various teams communicate with other teams and the whole staff.
- How will input from the school council be sought and utilized?
- How and when should the process be reviewed?

The decision-making model should be part of the school's manual for SBDM.

Workshop #10 — Handout 1

Decision-Making Cards

- parental complaints
- agenda for staff meeting
- allocation of support staff
- maintenance
- cold-weather policy
- cancel tournament — road conditions
- science fair/open house — date, format
- timetabling, alternate timetables
- repair equipment
- honour awards
- mission statement
- fundraising
- school philosophy and goals
- hiring staff
- team teaching policy
- class interruptions
- school surveys
- school improvement plans
- programs offered at school
- extracurricular scheduling
- school organization; i.e., split grades
- curriculum implementation
- bus procedure
- school times — opening, lunch
- supervision schedule
- program evaluation
- field trip policy
- extracurricular policy
- teacher evaluation
- canceling all student functions
- student suspension
- extreme student discipline matters
- resource purchases including texts
- student placement
- professional development goals and program
- placement of special needs students
- school calendar
- student policy; i.e., lates, gum, hats
- attendance policy
- report card formats and timing
- discipline policy
- renovations
- budget allocation
- Christmas party arrangements
- condoms in the washrooms
- rules about Xerox
- facility use
- fire drill
- calling the police
- examination exemptions
- reporting to parents — when? where? how?
- use of curriculum materials — resource evaluations
- methods of inclusive education
- use of volunteers
- assessment practices — use of portfolios
- class size and configuration
- lunchroom supervision
- alternative timetables
- integrating technology into the learning process

Workshop #10 — Handout 2
Possible Criteria for Making Decisions

Developed by Mountrose staff, Grande Prairie

Individual Decision	Consultation	Democratic	Collaborative	Consensus
• affects the decision-maker's domain only • decision based on an established policy or procedure • within the realm of responsibility of individuals: e.g., principal, coach, teacher • emerging or crisis situation • classroom routines • severe behaviour decisions • liability/legal issues	• decision-maker requires more information or input from others • decision will affect others • involves two or more persons directly involved in decisions • often may address confidential, personal or immediate issues	• decision based on personal choice • decision is clear cut — *oui* ou *non* • non-issues — mundane to general • majority rules • winners/losers • less important issues with limited options • issues that require immediate action	• decision may involve entire school, work teams, common interest groups • decision making requires discussion • all involved • usually an important issue • creative — developing a process • problem solving — information sharing • decision cannot be sabotaged because of the opportunity to be involved • more group decisions that affect policies, guidelines that dictate specific programs and services in the school	• decision involves and affects the entire population of the school • decision involves general agreement and acceptance • decisions that require unity (although some may be neutral) • based on the values, beliefs and philosophy of the school as a community • involvement of other stakeholders • major foundation of the school that requires a commitment by all staff

Workshop Idea #11: Determining Central and School-Based Decisions

This is an early step in the school-based decision making model. The process, a collaborative one, should involve all the stakeholders who are involved in the decisions (parents, staff, trustees, administrators, central office staff and students). They may all be involved in the process at the same time or in stages.

Purpose: to determine decisions made at all levels within the system

to build understanding and commitment.

Materials: worksheet, chart paper, pens

Time: 2 hours

Introduction

The group brainstorms a set of principles which will guide the decision about which level is the appropriate one to make the decision; e.g.,

- those closest to the decision make the decision
- those affected by the decision should have input
- economy of scale
- board priority.

Determining the List of Decisions

A small team constructs a list of decision-making responsibilities. Often these are grouped into categories. There are several from the literature or from other jurisdictions that may be used as the basis of the list to be used. You may use the list in Handout #1, page 49.

Site-based decision making is not a license for local schools to do anything they wish.
— Richard Neal, *School-based management: a detailed guide for successful implementation* (1991)

Central Office
Budget
Development/Allocation
Curriculum
Framework/Graduation
Requirements
Data Processing
Food Services
Maintenance/Construction
Negotiating Contracts
Personnel Screening
Printing
Purchasing
School Boundaries
Transportation

Building Based
Budget Implementation
Curriculum
Selection/Implementation
Hiring
Staff Development
— Buffalo Trail Regional Division

Individual/Group Analysis

- Each participant completes the worksheet. (Handout #1, page 49)
- In small groups, which include a cross-section of participants, come to consensus about where the decision is most appropriate.
- Identify those items which were the most difficult or on which it was impossible for the group to reach agreement.
- Presentation to large group. Discussion and a sense of which areas have consensus and which need more discussion.

Synthesis of Group Work

- A small task committee or one person does a summary of the agreements and identifies the areas that need further discussion.
- Discussion continues until decisions are made about all the areas.

Application

The final list is communicated to all individual groups and appropriate actions and responsibilities are put into place.

Note: This process is connected to several other areas in implementing school-based decision making. In particular it will be used in writing policy and developing a new budget process.

Workshop #11 — Handout 1
Individual Response

Decision Areas	DECISION AUTHORITY				
	School Authority on Own	School with District Knowledge	School Makes Recommendations to Board	District Decision	Shared (Description of How)
1. Staffing					
2. Identification of school improvement goals					
3. Decision about programs to offer					
4. Approaches for integration and special needs					
5. Class configuration					
6. The school day					
7. PD schedule					
8. Developing PD programs					
9. The school calendar					
10. Parent/teacher conferences — when, time in lieu, etc.					
11. Selection of curriculum material					
12. Technology planning					
13. Report cards and report procedures					
14. Staff evaluation — process and policy					
15. District program — which ones? how are they funded?					
16. Discipline and attendance					
17. Testing and achievement policies					
18. Student government issues; i.e., grad, yearbook					

Decision Areas	DECISION AUTHORITY				
	School Authority on Own	School with District Knowledge	School Makes Recommendation to Board	District Decision	Shared (Description of How)
19. Maintenance of the school					
20. Funding for special needs students					
21. Funding for professional development					
22. Configuration of administration					
23. Hiring of support staff					
24. Teacher transfers					
25. Selection of teachers					
26. Selection of administrators					
27. Contracting of service					
28. Substitute teacher policy and practice					
29. Role of the school council					
30. Parent volunteers					
31.					
32.					
33.					
34.					

Workshop #11 — Handout #2
Team-Building Activity: Determine Areas For Site-Based Decisions

Group members individually respond to 35 areas. Facilitator then leads discussion on which areas could be moved to building for decision making.

Which of the following policies or topics should be dealt with at the local site?

CIRCLE C = Central Office; B = Building

C B 1. Structure of the local building council
C B 2. Selection and/or movement of the principal
C B 3. Selection and/or movement of the teaching staff
C B 4. Selection of the support staff
C B 5. Budget — all or parts of it
C B 6. Differentiated staffing, staffing patterns
C B 7. Curriculum
C B 8. Graduation requirements
C B 9. Testing
C B 10. Attendance policies
C B 11. Use of the building and land
C B 12. Admissions, dismissals, student policies, behaviour codes, student absences, expulsion, dress
C B 13. Lunch programs
C B 14. Aides, nurses, counselors and other support personnel
C B 15. Buses
C B 16. Clubs
C B 17. Athletics
C B 18. Diplomas
C B 19. Special Education, gifted and talented programs
C B 20. Exchange students, nonresident students, international exchange students
C B 21. Fees
C B 22. Field trips, off-campus visits/programs
C B 23. Tobacco, alcohol, drug usage
C B 24. Homework
C B 25. Fundraising activities
C B 26. Public relations, information
C B 27. School council organization, parent conferences
C B 28. Textbooks and instructional materials
C B 29. Program evaluation
C B 30. In-service teacher training
C B 31. Pupil transfer policies
C B 32. School calendar — weekly, monthly, semester, annual
C B 33. Student publications
C B 34. Purchasing
C B 35. Controversial issues/academic freedom, student press rights

Site-Based Decision Making, developed by James E. Mitchell, EdD

Chapter 6

Enhancing Teaching and Learning

School-Based Decision Making Resource Guide: Focus on Teaching and Learning

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Enhancing Teaching and Learning

Focus Article

Tested in Alberta

Workshop Idea

Chapter Six

Introduction

Common themes throughout this resource guide have been the emphasis on teaching and learning as the purpose for school-based decision making, and the potential of using this initiative to make changes that would result in increased student learning.

This chapter extends the theme by first focusing on school education plans that relate to learning and teaching. All schools are required to have an education plan that will serve as a focus for making decisions about program emphases, staff development and budget priorities. These plans call for a changed role for staff and a new look at how time is used. Staff development or professional development is outlined as one of the critical strategies in the challenging task of improving teaching and learning. It is important to note that schools require plans for inservice training, not only for all staff but also for parents and community members.

The role of parents as partners in their children's learning is included but is not covered indepth. *Partners in Learning*, The Alberta Teachers' Association's manual, contains a more complete set of resource materials.

Again, the chapter includes a workshop idea and some school-based examples.

School Education Plans

All school-based decision making should have, as its goal, improved teaching and learning. If this is not the driving force behind school-based decisions, then the question is . . . why do it? A collaborative plan developed within the school community should focus on improving teaching and learning.

The school education plan should consider the goals and objectives of the Department of Education and of the school jurisdiction. However, the most significant aspect of the school plan should be the uniqueness of the school community made up of students, staff, parents and community members. Each school has unique needs that must be met within the culture and norms of the community in which it lives.

The school education plan is based on the mission and vision of the school and the district (see examples of mission and vision in the sidebars). The mission and vision of the school are ways to measure the education plan. "Does the plan lead us to our mission?" is the question that should be in the minds of the planners.

Through the goal-setting activities of the school plan, stakeholders develop activities that improve teaching and learning. These goals reflect the needs of the school community. The process by which the goals of the school plan are developed is as important as the goals themselves. All stakeholders (students, staff, parents and community) need to have ownership of the plan and the goals and therefore need to have legitimate input into their formation and implementation. Chapter Three discusses goal setting and provides a workshop outline.

School plans become public documents. This ensures a marked accountability factor as well as an evaluation factor in the plan. The plan must always be developed with indicators of success in mind. Stakeholders need to have a clear understanding of how the plan and the goals will be evaluated. How will we know if we are doing better? Keep the plan in focus, revise it often. The plan and its outcomes become part of the end-of-year school report.

The school plan drives the decisions that the school community will make regarding the organization of the school; the allocation of resources, both human and financial; and the organization of time, personnel, space and, to a large extent, curriculum.

Samples of school education plans are included on pages 23–36.

Staff should be involved not simply as an exercise but to establish a covenant to guide further decisions about goals, staffing, scheduling, materials, assessment, curriculum, staff development and resource allocation.

— Carl Glickman,
"The Essence of School Renewal: the prose has begun."
Educational Leadership (1992)

University Heights Elementary School, Calgary

Our Mission: University Elementary School is an interdependent community of students, staff, parents and University of Calgary partners interconnected through a shared commitment to:

- building a strong foundation of knowledge
- inspiring a passion for learning
- challenging perceived boundaries
- designing active research
- the continuous improvement of safe, open learning environments.

Lacombe Upper Elementary School

Lacombe Upper Elementary School is committed to working together to provide a quality education in a caring environment.

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Establishing Priorities

The priorities established by the school are the result of the school plan. Schools that are effective in school-based decision making are able to reorganize themselves to accomplish their visions and implement their plans. If we focus on learning and make it a priority for time, funds, and programming, we enhance learning and teaching. The reorganization goes beyond a simple change in governance. Two conditions are necessary in order for this to work:

- People at the school site must have genuine authority over budget, personnel and curriculum.
- Authority must be used to introduce changes that directly affect teaching and learning. Odden, Eleanor and Wholstetter, Priscilla "Making School-Based Management Work." *Educational Leadership* (February 1995).

In a study of 13 school districts and 40 schools, Odden and Wholstetter identified six strategies for the successful implementation of school-based decision making:

- Disperse power. Effective schools disperse power throughout the school so that many stakeholders participate in establishing priorities. This can be done through a representative site team or council and subcommittees that report to the site team/council. See Chapter Three for examples.
- Stress professional development as an ongoing, school-wide activity. Successful schools orient activities toward building a school-wide capacity for change, creating a professional community and developing a shared knowledge base.
- Disseminate information broadly. Decisions are made best by having the best information available. Information needs to flow in many directions. Feedback from the school community is vital in order to make informed decisions, as is information from central office and the school out to the community.
- Select the right principal. The principal needs to strike a balance between being an active leader and maintaining a hands-off position. The principal needs skills in the areas of facilitating, delegating, coaching, challenging, leading and promoting. The principal's role is one of leading the leaders of curriculum and instruction — the teachers.
- Have a well-defined vision, and a shared understanding and commitment of the vision. See Chapter Three for a discussion of vision/mission.
- Reward accomplishments of individuals and groups. Active restructuring requires energy, commitment and recognition that this is important in the continuation and maintenance of school-based decision making.

Five interrelated beliefs constitute SBDM:

1. The primary focus should be on the learner and the learning.
2. The school should be the focus of improvement.
3. The authority of the school should be expanded.
4. Successful school improvement requires a deliberate and scheduled devolution of decision-making responsibility to the school.
5. Central office acts not only in an administrative function, but also as a service and support agency.

— Excerpts from SBDM Manual, Rocky View School Division and Parkland School Division

One of the reasons SBM is being questioned is that only occasionally have teachers had opportunities to become involved with decisions that they care passionately about. What seems vital in the process is to make connections with the teachers' classroom lives and their conception of what teaching and learning is all about.

— Midgely & Wood,
"Beyond Site-Based Management,"
Phi Delta Kappan (1993)

Research reveals that the most successful learning does, in fact, occur in schools where teachers not only teach skillfully in separate classrooms, but also find solutions together. . . In the Basic School, teachers, as team members, have shared goals, and time is regularly set aside for professional collaboration. Specifically we recommend that teachers in the school meet for several days at the beginning and end of each school year, and preferably get together at least once a week. Bringing teachers together is, we recognize, easier said than done, yet many schools are, in fact, finding ways to do it."

— Ernest Boyer,
The Basic School: A Community for Learning,
Carnegie Foundation
for the Advancement
of Teaching (1995)

Once the priorities of the school are established, processes must be in place for decisions to be made and plans implemented. Workgroups need to be established. Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves, in *What's Worth Fighting For in Your School*, compellingly argue that working collectively in schools is the best way to improve them. School improvement takes place when staff hold professional conversations and work together to solve instructional problems, and when staff work closely with parents and the school council.

Schools where effective school-based decision making takes place have created a number of networks or workgroups. Staff may serve on grade groups or subject-area teams. Schools may be divided into subject departments that provide leadership in curricular areas. Issues may drive membership in workgroups. As issues arise, staff may join the workgroup to resolve the issue or to make recommendations on an ad hoc basis. Staff may be required to serve on more than one team or workgroup. The importance of the workgroups becomes apparent when decisions are to be made. Because workgroups/teams cut across grade levels and subjects, teachers and other team members have a wide awareness of the needs of the school.
Developing priorities and implementing plans takes time. Fullan says "building a collaborative culture involves a long developmental journey and there are no shortcuts."

Finding Time

One of the resources in short supply in schools is time. There is a feeling that school-based decision making requires many committees and increased time to make decisions regarding the efficient operation of the school. If teaching and learning are the important tasks of schools, then workgroups and committees cannot be seen as taking time from instruction. This stance often forces the school decision-making and planning processes to take place outside of normal instructional time.

If we rethink the concept of learning time, we free ourselves to be receptive to ideas of finding time for the role of school leadership. Mary Anne Raywid in "Finding Time for Collaboration," *Educational Leadership* (September 1993), identified examples of low-cost ways of finding time for work and planning groups:

- Common preparation periods and/or lunch periods provide a time for grade or subject meetings.
- In one school, one morning per week is given over to community service. Teachers meet while the students are performing community service out of the school.
- Schools have been arranged in houses, with one house at a time performing community service. The teachers from that house meet and plan during the community service time.

- Increasing class size by one or two students in some large districts provides enough resources to allow for substitute teachers to cover classes to enable teachers to meet.
- In a year-round school, the staff have adopted a three-week intersession that allows them to hold a concentrated two- or three-day planning session.
- Three-to five days of day-long professional development time has been restructured to provide 13 two-hour sessions every two-to three weeks.
- Five of the required instructional days have been converted to staff development time.
- Time has been traded, with teachers giving up 45 minutes of their time for 45 minutes of early dismissal.
- The school day has been lengthened and the time banked to provide half a day per week for planning and work groups.
- Activity days, set up by adults in the community to teach various hobbies supervised by some teacher, can provide time for some teachers to plan collaboratively.

Teachers cannot be expected to undertake reorganization and the building of curriculum as well as school leadership roles totally on an after-school basis. Collaborative planning time must come, in part, from the prime-time school day and must be of a sustained nature. A common preparation period of 30 minutes does not provide enough time to adequately address the need for collaborative planning. There must be a mix of opportunities to reflect on daily activities, make corrective decisions, and to plan for improved teaching and learning; e.g.,

- time banking and early closure once a week.
- team teaching
- use substitutes to free up work team
- pods, or timetable arrangements to bring staff together
- study groups to focus ideas.

The Changing Role of the Teacher

Since school-based decision making operates on the premise that the best decisions are made at the level and by the people responsible for their implementation, the role of the teacher in school leadership is new and different. Teachers are now becoming more involved in the organization of the school and in the decisions that affect the teaching and learning that is taking place. In too many instances, assumptions are being made that teachers are trained to do this complex task. A new role for teachers is that of a learner in school-based decision making. Teachers need to be open to this role and realize that the learning is going to take time and involve some risk. Training opportunities for all staff must become part of the school plan to meet the new and varied needs of the staff and the school community.

There are more meaningful ways to "count" learning time than by tracking school attendance and seat time. Counting as available learning time only the time spent in the classrooms discounts substantial amounts of time that students spend in educational activities and relationships. A reassessment of what constitutes "learning time" will influence the way educators view their instructional roles.

— Adelman and Pringle
"Education Reform and the
Use of time"
Phi Delta Kappan (1995)

Fundamentally, only a few broad approaches exist for tackling the time challenge:

- *taking time from that now scheduled for other things*
- *tdding additional time to the school day and/or the school year*
- *altering staff utilization patterns.*

Two opposing concerns must be kept in mind:

1. *It is neither fair nor wise to ask teachers to deduct all the time needed from their personal lives (like weekends and holidays). People have lives outside of the school.*
2. *Conscientious teachers are reluctant to be away from their classrooms for an extended time unless they can feel confident about what is happening in their absence.*

— Mary Anne Raywid
"Finding Time for
Collaboration" *Educational
Leadership* (September 1993)

Teaching must be restructured to include learning as a basic requirement of the job if public schools are to improve themselves.

To be successful, teachers must have time to study, plan, work collaboratively, try out new ideas and build on each other's knowledge and experience.

This final reform — weaving continuous learning into the fabric of the teaching job — will be the one that makes the difference if we can act in a concerted fashion in every school and community to take the teaching job as it is now defined and confined and extend it into a true profession.

— Judith Renyi,
Director of National
Foundation for Improvement
of Education,
Education Week
(November 1996)

Teacher Leadership Roles

- *School improvement team*
- *Chair for department, grade or curriculum team*
- *Mentors for beginning teachers*
- *Study grant facilitator*
- *Action research coaches*
- *Staff developer*
- *Curriculum writer*

— Stephanie Hirsh,
School Team Innovator
(March, 1997)

School staffs need to work as problem-solving teams — collecting data and information to make informed decisions in their schools. They need to learn what is good data, who to consult, what decisions are individual and what are collaborative (see collaborative decision-making models Chapter Five).

Teachers are going to play a leadership role in school-based decision making. As issues arise, the leadership role becomes situational rather than based on a position in the organization. Teachers with specific expertise become the leaders while the issue is being resolved. The leadership role thus changes depending on the issue.

Teachers are going to become, to a greater extent, curriculum decision makers in their schools. They need to look closely at their teaching strategies in order to continually work on improvement. They need to work collaboratively with their colleagues to develop teaching and learning opportunities that meet the needs of the students in their school community. Teachers need to develop partnerships with other players in the education of students. They need to become better communicators with the partners outside of the school in order to improve the learning within the school community.

A teacher's reflection on this role is found on page 12 of Chapter Four.

Professional development is of critical importance in preparation for this role for all staff in the school. Support and clerical staff also assume new leadership roles as members of work teams and participants in vision and goal setting.

Focus on Staff Development

Staff development is one of the key strategies in the challenging work of improving teaching and learning. Although it is important for all partners in education (administrators, trustees, teachers and parents), this article will focus on the professional development of teachers.

Improved learning for students will not happen simply because a "reformer," be it the provincial government, a superintendent or a school principal, declares that it will. If serious improvement in student achievement is the goal, then time, resources and technical assistance for professional development must be provided.

A powerful concept for professional development can be found in Thomas Sergiovanni's *Leadership for the Schoolhouse: How Is It Different? Why Is It Important?* (1996), in which he connects leadership, a moral concept for schools and a collaborative approach to change. "I believe that it is possible to rally enough small groups of thoughtful and committed citizens throughout the continent to create the way we think about politics in schools."

Sergiovanni suggests a new theory for schools, one not copied from business or industry. Characteristics of a "theory for the schoolhouse" include:

- be idea based
- emphasize more real connections
- evoke sacred images of what goes on
- compel people to respond for internal rather than external reasons
- acknowledge that humans are motivated in part by self-interest, but have the capacity and the desire to respond for internal rather than external reasons
- support decisions about school organization, curriculum and classroom life that reflect constructivist teaching and learning principles
- strive to transform the school in such a way that it becomes a centre of inquiry.

Sergiovanni sees a critical link between what happens to teachers and what happens to students: "Inquiring classrooms are not likely to flourish in schools where inquiry among teachers is discouraged. A commitment to problem solving is difficult to instil in students who are taught by teachers for whom problem solving is not allowed. Where there is little discourse among teachers, discourse among students will be harder to promote and maintain."

Professional development for all staff must become an integral part of the school year and the school day, and must not be relegated to two or three professional development days or convention days.

School board policy and procedures for school-based decision making shall: include guidelines for inservice and professional development opportunities for staff and school council members to facilitate changes in roles and responsibilities including: problem solving, management and communications skills of all stakeholders.

Provincial School-Based
Decision-Making Policy,
January 1996

The tension between teaching and school leadership activities cannot be resolved by suboptimizing both. If restructuring is to make any difference, teachers need to be able to perform at their best in each role, and the roles need to be complementary, integrated and synergistic.

— Tom Donahoe,
"Finding the Way: Structure, Time and Culture in School Improvement," *Phi Delta Kappan* (December 1993)

Unless you [as a teacher] take active responsibility for your professional development, unless you protect yourself against the insidious consequences of intellectual-professional loneliness, you reduce the satisfactions you will derive from your career.

— Sarason,
The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform (1990)

Staff Development Programs for SBDM

School jurisdictions and schools in Alberta are using professional development time and programs to facilitate school-based decision making in several ways:

- to initiate and implement a model of SBDM at the school
- to design a school improvement plan
- to work on specific goals that flow from the school improvement plans, especially those that focus on curriculum and instruction
- to focus on student learning and developing a learning community
- to develop the skills required for SBDM.

Chapters Two and Three provide a description of the processes that are necessary to initiate and implement a model for SBDM in a school. In the first phase, many schools have used PD days or PD meetings for such topics/sessions as:

- awareness and information
- a decision-making model for the school
- examination of roles and responsibilities
- establishing structural teams and committees.

It is important that the whole staff is involved at this stage. Often, a PD day is used to accomplish these tasks and to minimize the use of after-school time. Important projects such as this benefit from a "prime-time" emphasis.

As well as using PD days, professional development time can be purchased through the use of substitute teaching or by extension of the school days to provide a half-day block once a week/month. Grade or subject teams often use their common preparation time to work on projects such as cooperative learning, math skills, reading for everyone.

Merely being involved in decision making is not sufficient. Teachers must be involved in decisions that make a difference: what students learn, how students learn, what good teaching is and what changes in curriculum, school organization or teaching strategies will improve teaching; e.g., a program to design mentorship programs for students and teachers with time in the day set aside for helping one another learn.

SBDM requires the enhancement of interpersonal and group skills. Although most teachers have inservice programs and experience in these skills, it is often necessary to heighten the level of skills when they wish to work in a more collaborative way. Professional development activities can be used to focus on:

- conflict resolution
- team building
- consensus building
- communication skills (listening, paraphrasing).

Time and again Sarason (1993) has underscored the vital link between teacher continuous learning and student learning:

> *Yes, we expect teachers to give their all to the growth and development of students. But a teacher cannot sustain such giving unless the conditions exist for the continued growth and development of the teacher.*
>
> — Thomas Sergiovanni, *Leadership for the Schoolhouse: How Is It Different? Why Is It Important?* (1996)

Teacher development must move centre stage in school improvement. That means management systems, organizational patterns and teacher growth strategies must:

- *recognize individual differences among teachers*
- *encourage teachers to reflect on their own practices*
- *give a high priority to conversation and dialogue among teachers*
- *provide for collaborative learning among teachers*
- *emphasize caring communities*
- *call upon teachers to respond morally to their work.*

— Thomas Sergiovanni, *Leadership for the Schoolhouse: How Is It Different? Why Is It Important?* (1996)

Professional development in schools that are successfully implementing SBDM is viewed as an ongoing process by all staff as they work to develop a school-wide commitment to continuous improvement. There are many approaches that teachers use to improve their teaching and their students' opportunities to learn. In addition to the school-based professional development programs for the entire staff which were described in the last section, teachers participate in many of the following activities:

- study groups around content (math) or issues (integration of special needs)
- visiting other teachers' classrooms
- attending conferences (The Alberta Teachers' Association's 21 specialist councils each host an extensive conference; two days each year teachers attend a teachers' convention)
- peer coaching and mentoring activities
- discussion groups using professional videos
- teacher centres and libraries
- action research activities
- university courses.

In a study to identify successful restructuring programs in schools, Mohrman and Wohlstetter (1994) found that: "Perhaps the most significant common element across actively restructuring schools was the extent to which organizational mechanisms were in place that generated interaction for school-level reform around issues related to curriculum and instruction."

They further note that focused time was devoted to the development of knowledge and skills, and the acquisition and examination of information.

In *Student Achievement Through Staff Development: Fundamentals of School Renewal* (1995), Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers write that the creation of a staff development system that affects student learning requires the coordination of a renewal of individual teachers, school staffs, the district and the government agencies. They argue that school systems should provide 15–20 days of staff development for individual professional development, school improvement programs, and district initiatives. Joyce and Showers suggest that:

- school systems have a responsibility to ensure that all personnel regularly study teaching and school improvement
- student learning can be greatly increased through staff development
- virtually all teachers can learn the most powerful and complex teaching strategies provided that staff development is designed properly

Teachers, principals and administrators need time for reform. They need time to come up to speed as academic standards are overhauled, time to come to grips with new assessment systems, and time to make productive and effective use of greater professional autonomy, one hallmark of reform in the 1990s. Adding school reform to the list of things schools must accomplish, without recognizing that time in the current calendar is a limited resource, trivializes the effort. It sends a powerful message to teachers: don't take this reform business too seriously. Squeeze it in on your own time.

— National Education Commission on Time and Learning, Prisoners of Time (1994)

Recipes for Creating a Learning Organization:

1. *Reinvent schools around learning, not time.*
2. *Fix the design flaw: use time in new and better ways.*
3. *Establish an academic day.*
4. *Keep schools open longer to meet the needs of children and communities.*
5. *Give teachers the time they need.*
6. *Invest in technology.*
7. *Develop local action plans to transform schools.*
8. *Share the responsibility: finger pointing and evasion must end.*

— National Education Commission on Time and Learning, Prisoners of Time (1994)

- embedded staff development will have an effect on the ethos of the profession of education
- the staff development system needs to be operationalized as a large-scale action research project.

If staff development is to affect student learning, it must focus on student needs and outcomes in terms of emphases and programs. A survey of student needs and discussion with students about ways they believe can help them to learn would give an interesting and necessary perspective. [See research in Chapter Four, page 3.]

> *Teachers must have time to master their subjects, design learning experiences for students that will lead to the achievement of rigorous academic standards, use improved assessment systems, better prepare for teaching their students, and work with and learn from colleagues and others with particular kinds of expertise*
>
> — National Education Commission on Time and Learning, Prisoners of Time (1994)

Individual Professional Development Plans

The teacher develops the goals of the plan by analyzing current trends in education, assessing personal professional strengths and needs, and determining resources and support. Plans are developed in collaboration with the superintendent or principal. The teacher meets with the principal to review the plan at the end of the annual period. Three questions need to be discussed at that time:

- How did the plan address the professional needs of the teacher?
- How was the plan implemented?
- What are the implications for future action?

Individual professional development plans could be combined with school-based professional development for district-wide school improvement. Teachers are in the best position to determine the resources needed to implement the individual plans and, through school-based decision making, be able to make decisions that impact on teaching and learning in the school community.

It is the professional responsibility of each teacher to pursue lifelong professional development. Further to directions outlined in *An Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta*, this professional responsibility has been formalized through an amended provincial teacher evaluation policy that requires that all teachers annually implement and complete an individual PD plan.

These plans can include any activity that demonstrably promises to help each teacher to enhance students' learning and achievement. Developed in collaboration with superintendents, principals or a designated representative group of teachers, plans should focus on goals that are in keeping with: the teaching quality standards and descriptors in the quality teaching position paper; individual, school, jurisdiction and provincial goals; and principles of sound professional development.

The school principal monitors implementation of each teacher's professional development plan. The teacher meets with the principal to review the plan at the end of the annual period. The plan is then returned to the teacher.

Teachers' individual professional development plans can provide an effective means through which teachers engage in discussion and share learnings about teaching to the ultimate benefit of students.

Teaching Quality Standard

Quality teaching occurs when the teacher's ongoing analysis of the context, and the teacher's decisions about which pedagogical knowledge and abilities to apply result in optimum learning by students.

All teachers are expected to meet the Teaching Quality Standard throughout their careers. However, teaching practices will vary because each teaching situation is different and in constant change. Reasoned judgment must be used to determine whether the Teaching Quality Standard is being met in a given context.

Descriptors of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes Related to Permanent Certification.

a) Teachers' application of pedagogical knowledge, skills and attributes is based in their ongoing analysis of contextual variables.
b) Teachers understand the legislated, moral and ethical frameworks within which they work.
c) Teachers understand the subject disciplines they teach.
d) Teachers know there are many approaches to teaching and learning.
e) Teachers engage in a range of planning activities.
f) Teachers create and maintain environments that are conducive to student learning.
g) Teachers translate curriculum content and objectives into meaningful learning activities.
h) Teachers apply a variety of technologies to meet students' learning needs.
i) Teachers gather and use information about students' learning needs and progress.
j) Teachers establish and maintain partnerships among school, home and community, and within their own schools.
k) Teachers are career-long learners.

Ministerial order (#016/97)
Appendix to *School Act*

Professional Development Resources In Alberta

Regional Consortia

Six regional consortia were established in Alberta during the 1995/96 school year. Each regional consortium is governed by a board of directors made up of local representatives appointed by the education partner organizations and the university or college in its region. You are invited to contact any one of the executive directors listed below to discuss your jurisdiction, school or school council inservice, training and professional development needs.

Jean Hoeft, Executive Director
Calgary Regional Consortium
Telephone: (403) 291–0967
Fax: (403) 250–3904
e-mail: crc@rockyview.ab.ca

Shona Sekulic, Executive Director
Northwest Regional Learning Consortium
Telephone: 1–800–864–4140
Fax: (403) 864–2773
e-mail: sekulic@agt.net

Earl Choldin, Executive Director
Learning Network: East Central Regional Consortium
Telephone: (403) 492–0454
Toll Free: 1-888-945-5500
Fax: (403) 492–0390
e-mail: LearningNet@faculty.educ.ualberta.ca

Louise Beermann, Executive Director
Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium
Telephone: (403) 381–5580
Fax: (403) 381-5709
e-mail: beermanl@cadvision.com

Shirley Van Eaton, Executive Director
Central Alberta Regional Consortium
Telephone: (403) 342–3476
Fax: (403) 357-3642
e-mail: svaneaton@rdc.ab.ca

Bill Lockhart, Executive Director
Edmonton Regional Consortium
Telephone: (403) 492–5339
Fax: (403) 492–0390
e-mail:
Bill.Lockhart@gpu.srv.ualberta.ca

Alberta Education Web-site http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca

Regional consortia are vehicles to link professional development, inservice and training resources at the local, regional and provincial level to support the development of the knowledge and skills necessary for all people who influence student learning.

Regional consortia:

- will support the successful implementation of school jurisdiction goals as identified in board education plans and school plans as well as the goals and strategies of the government three-year plan for education
- will broker, coordinate, evaluate and act as a clearinghouse for available training and development resources
- may undertake the development of professional development programs to meet emerging education needs; e.g., integration of technology to improve student learning.

- will provide a collaborative and coordinated approach to the delivery and support of ongoing professional development opportunities for all participants in education
- will help implement school-based decision making, school councils and the functions included in redefined roles and responsibilities.
- will provide improved access to inservice, training and professional development programs at a reasonable cost.

© *Guidelines for Establishing Regional Consortia*
An Initiative for the Improvement of Education and Its Delivery
Alberta Education, September 1995

Boards and schools are invited to contact the regional consortium in their area and work with it to develop a three-year plan to support adult learning. The following model plan is meant to provide some ideas of how to work with regional consortium to support the implementation of school-based decision making which is focused on student learning.

A school board, with staff and school council members, should develop an inservice and professional development plan to support implementation of school-based decisions making. This plan may be developed in collaboration with the regional professional development consortium.
— Provincial School-Based
Decision Making Policy 1.8.2,
January 9, 1996

Sample Educational Plan

GOAL: to improve student achievement including diploma examination scores in secondary mathematics.

The board will partner with the regional consortium and its other participating boards to develop a three-year professional development program for secondary mathematics teachers to support them in the implementation of the western protocol mathematics curriculum. Together with the regional consortium the board will:

- develop and conduct a needs assessment to determine the needs of secondary mathematics teachers in relation to the new curriculum
- develop a program that is modeled on National Staff Development Council *Standards for Staff Development*
- develop a corps of teacher-facilitators to plan and deliver the program
- develop a tool to evaluate the effect of the program on student scores.

The board will support the program by:

- ensuring adequate monies are available for secondary mathematics inservice
- making secondary mathematics teachers and their principals aware that this program is a priority for our board
- designate an associate superintendent as having direct responsibility for coordinating the program with the regional consortium and for reporting results to the board.

Sample District Technology Plan

GOAL: to support the integration of technology into curriculum by providing technology-related inservice, training and/or professional development to school administrators, teachers, support staff, school council and parents.

The board will request that the executive director of the regional consortium consult with the district technology planning committee to:

- develop and conduct a needs assessment in the district
- develop an ongoing, job-embedded staff development program based on NSCD *Standards for Professional Development*
- broker inservice and training programs for the district
- coordinate inservice and training programs with neighbouring districts to reduce costs
- develop a program assessment tool that will also serve as an on-going needs assessment.

The board will support this work by:

- dedicating funds to this program.u
- earmarking 30 per cent of the district technology budget to professional development
- seeking a business partnership in the community to provide in-kind services related to professional development; i.e., labs or instructors.

Universities and Colleges

Most universities and colleges offer courses in addition to their regular full-time programs. Through the Department of Extension, Adult Education Centres and Continuing Professional Development Departments, many opportunities exist for professional development.

The Alberta Teachers' Association Programs

The Alberta Teachers' Association offers a wide range of workshops, presentations and courses designed to improve teaching, promote the cause of education, increase public interest in education, resolve organizational problems and develop skills. These courses and workshops are suitable for staff meetings, school council workshops and meetings, professional development days, institutes, conventions and specialist council conferences. They are presented by association staff officers or by association instructors.

A complete list of workshops, courses and presentations is available from The Alberta Teachers' Association, Barnett House, 11010 142 St. NW, Edmonton AB T5N 2R1 or on their website at http://www.teachers.ab.ca.; phone 1–800–232–7208,

(403) 447-9400, Fax (403) 455-6481.

School Jurisdictions' Programs and Services

School jurisdictions organize professional development workshops for their staffs. Many of the larger jurisdictions welcome participants from outside their area on a cost-recovery basis. Many smaller jurisdictions join together to provide professional development opportunities for their respective districts. Contact your school jurisdiction for more information.

Parents and Community — Partners in Learning

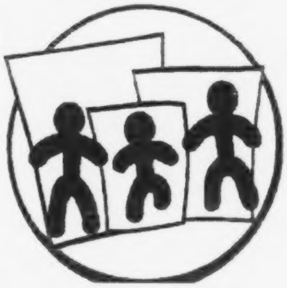
Parents in general, and school councils in particular, can have a role as partners with staff in improving student learning. This partnership is essential in an improvement plan.

Most studies of successful school/family partnership programs recommend a five-year plan to reach the goal of extensive cooperation between schools and families. Before great partnerships are built, teachers, parents, students and community members have to change long-standing practices, challenge long-held beliefs and patiently live through a few mistakes. Partnership is a process and cannot be achieved overnight.

Developing partnerships that are involved in supporting classroom education makes a positive impact but the role in students' education does not stop there, for education thrives outside of the classroom as well. Education is ongoing and many people influence and teach students. The important aspect of partnership is the recognition of the partners by the specific role they play.

Pseudo-Involvement	Meaningful Involvement
• is driven by political motives • is directed at school or teacher needs • assumes home and school are independent • assumes parents already know enough about the school and teachers already know enough about the home • is viewed as a means of maintaining the status quo, reducing conflict • is based upon brief, ritualized, impersonal communication between school and home	• is driven by educational motives • is directed at the needs of the student • assumes home and school are interdependent • assumes parents need to be educated about the school and teachers need to be educated about the home • is an important vehicle for school improvement • is based upon sustained and free communication between school and home

— Pat Renihan and Fred Renihan,
"Encouraging Meaningful Parental Involvement,"
The School Trustee (February 1994), p. 19



The *Partners in Learning* manual is available from The Alberta Teachers' Association ($15 plus GST).
Contact the ATA at
(403) 447-9400 (Edmonton);
1-800-232-7208 (toll free);
or by fax at (403) 455-6481.

Parents and school community members can get involved in a number of ways. Parents can be involved in the school itself, or by supporting their child at home. Parents can become active members of the school council, volunteer at the school, help with classroom activities or become a volunteer aid. Parents can play an active role at home by becoming a supporter of their child's education. By establishing lines of communication with the teachers, parents can keep abreast of classroom developments, assignments, concerns, achievement and curricular expectations before these develop into major problems. Parents can reinforce learning that has taken place in the classroom. They are able to extend the learning experiences through family activities such as travel, collections, hobbies and conversations. The key to supporting the learner at home is communication. By knowing what is happening in the daily school life of the child, the parent is in a better position to offer support and extension of learning.

A Healthy School Participation Diet

Just as no one food can provide all the nutritional needs of a healthy body, no one type of parent and community involvement will make a great school. The sidebar shows the wide variety of activities that combine to transform a school into a learning community.

Sharing responsibility for students' learning between parents, teachers, communities and students themselves can take on a variety of forms depending on the needs of the partners. Partnerships promise improved communication, awareness, knowledge, skill and participation. Partnerships also offer the promise that parents and teachers will not make or receive, as they sometimes do, the "phone call" which painfully reveals the consequences of the absence of partnership. Most importantly, partnerships promise that students' learning will be greatly improved.

Parenting:
- Parents provide food, shelter and love
- Schools help families create homes that support learning
- Parents ask questions and share important information with schools
- Schools design varied and continuing forms of communication with the home.

Volunteering:
- Parents volunteer to share time and talents with the school
- Schools recruit and support parent volunteers.

Learning at Home:
- Parents support learning at home with time, study space and support
- Schools support parents in developing curriculum-related home activities.

Decision Making:
- Parents become involved in school decision making through school councils
- Schools include parents in decision making, and support parent leaders and representatives.

Collaborating with Community:
- Parents and others in the community support schools in a variety of ways
- Schools identify and integrate community resources to strengthen school programs.

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An Example of Guidelines for Parent Involvement

Marion Hogue, LEARN Parental Involvement Task Force, UCLA Management Program

What Being a LEARN School Means for Parents

In order to improve student achievement, LEARN schools are dedicated to substantial restructuring of eight school responsibilities. This means that parents in LEARN schools are involved in these eight areas:

- Student Learning and Assessment:
  - can understand clearly what their students should know and be able to do for each grade level or class in the students' schedule
  - can understand clearly how their students' learning will be measured from year to year or level to level.
- Governance and Accountability:
  - can participate in school-wide decisions about the school budget, school-wide performance goals, parental involvement and school evaluation plans and other issues affecting their school.
- Educator Development:
  - can expect that faculty and staff will continue to improve and upgrade their educational practices.
- Parental Involvement:
  - can expect to be full partners in their children's education by feeling welcome at the school and in the classrooms; having access to a parent centre and parent education classes; having the ability to form an independent organization to advocate collectively for the rights of children for a quality education; and can expect to work collaboratively with faculty and staff to design, implement and evaluate an effective plan to involve all parents in the education of their children.
- Social Services:
  - can look forward to coordinated health and social services for children and their families in each high school cluster.
- School-to-Work Transition:
  - can expect that students will develop a personal plan to prepare for a career
  - can expect that students will be adequately prepared for work or post-secondary education.
- Facilities:
  - can look forward to improved maintenance
  - can expect the district to make better use of existing facilities for the education of students.
- Finance:
  - can look forward to working collaboratively with school faculty and staff to manage the entire school budget
  - can look forward to receiving funding at the school site based on the number of students and the intensity of services required for each student's education.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Excerpts from the "Resource Kit For Site-Based Decision Making" Document, Edmonton RCSS District No. 7

Terry Fortin, Superintendent

Staff development is an important aspect of school growth. Each site needs to consider what kinds of ongoing and occasional initiatives are needed to keep staff ready for the changing needs of schools. There has to be a balance of local and central initiatives. The ownership of staff development has to be at each site. On the other hand, it is naive to think that steady system-wide growth will occur without some central support. In fact, a high level of support and commitment must come from the district leadership and, at the school, from the principal.

The Change Process

The district needs to consider the factors that affect change if there is to be hope for successful implementation of restructured learning and SBDM. Two Canadian researchers have captured the elements of the educational change as well as anyone: Michael Fullan in *The New Meaning of Education Change* (1991) and *Change Forces* (1993), and Andy Hargreaves in *Changing Teachers, Changing Times: Teachers' Work and Culture in the Post-Modern Age* (1994). Despite the fact that these researchers tell us that the vast majority of change implementations over the last 30 years have failed, we have gained a substantial body of knowledge about the process of change.

Implementation, whether it is voluntary or imposed, is nothing other than a process of learning something new. One foundation of new learning is interaction. Learning by doing, concrete role models, meeting with resource consultants and fellow implementers, practise of the behaviour and the fits and starts of cumulative, ambivalent, gradual self-confidence all constitute a process of coming to see the meaning of the change more clearly (Fullan, 1991, p. 85).

Research on implementation has demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that these processes of sustained interaction and staff development are crucial regardless of what the change is. The more complex the change, the more interaction is required during implementation. People can and do change, but it requires social energy. School districts and schools can help generate extra energy by developing or otherwise supporting continuous staff development opportunities for teachers, administrators and others (Fullan, 1991, p. 86).

Compared to the rather meager body of research on the context and substance of educational change, there is now a rich store of literature, research and practical understanding of the change process. In the field of school improvement, many maxims have been gleaned from this research and applied as a result of it. These include the observations that change is a process, not an event; that practice changes before beliefs; that it is better to think big but start small; that evolutionary planning works better than linear planning; that policy cannot mandate what matters; that implementation strategies which integrate bottom-up strategies with top-down ones are more effective than top-down or bottom-up ones alone; and that conflict is a necessary part of change (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 10).

Adult Learning

We are in the process of learning, and we need to understand and apply the principles of adult learning as we plan activities that advance staff development. Facilitators of adult learning should consider such principles as:

- adult learners see themselves as capable of self-direction and desire others to see them in the same way
- adult learners have established emotional frameworks consisting of values, attitudes and tendencies, an adult's ability to change (and therefore learn) is directly proportional to the emotional safety he or she feels
- adults possess a large bank of previous learning and experience. Adults learn best when they are able to link new knowledge and skills to knowledge and skills they learned previously
- adult learners should be involved in decision making, design and implementation of their learning.

Literature and learning materials are available to train adult learning facilitators.

Time

Most of the literature on implementation of SBDM raises the issue of time. Hargreaves in *Changing Teachers, Changing Times: Teachers' Work and Culture in the Post-Modern Age* (1991) captures the problem in the following quote: "An important barrier to providing time for staff development is the uncertainty about what to do with students while teachers are away from their classrooms. With the help of parents and the community, we need to find ways that do not involve extra cost to solve this puzzle. Some writers suggest 20 per cent of the teacher's work time ought to be in collaborative learning and planning. Once we acknowledge what time means for the teacher and provide time both qualitatively and quantitatively, the change we hope for will come about."

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Excerpts from "Emphasizing Learning Through Corporate Effectiveness" Foothills School Division No. 38

David Lynn, Superintendent

Our Mission and Mandate:

Growth for all through quality education in a caring place where potential and well-being count.

We are responsible for ensuring that our students learn the skills and knowledge needed to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of our society.

Our Beliefs in Support of Learning:

We believe:

- in a universally accessible public school system governed by a locally elected board of trustees
- student learning is the central focus for all divisional departments
- all school activity should be focused on preparing students to participate fully in our democratic society with the global economy
- it is our responsibility to provide learning opportunities such that learners are challenged and successful
- the school's interest in caring for students is subordinate to the family's and community's obligation to provide the social, emotional and physical supports which nurture learning. The school's role is to support the family and community in the way schools care for students
- in safe and supportive learning and working environments featuring open communication, teamwork and recognition of success
- in a commitment to the common good within an environment that promotes high standards of ethics, morals and values through shared leadership and responsibility
- resources need to be utilized effectively and efficiently to promote student learning
- our actions should reflect and support continuous high expectations, improvement and innovation.

Parameters for Enhanced School-Based Decision Making: The Path to Connected Autonomy in Foothills School Division

The potential for enhanced student learning exists when certain decisions are made in close proximity to the educative process. Foothills schools are invited to assume increasing autonomy for decision making within our corporate effectiveness framework. Parameters for enhanced school-based decision making have been established and presuppose that schools:

- respect the *School Act* (and related legislation), Alberta Education regulations, board policy, local collective agreements and implement Alberta Education's *Programs of Study*
- develop a strong inclusionary foundation for decision making consistent with Alberta Education's regulations on school councils
- pledge support for common beliefs about learning
- commit to ongoing professional growth
- achieve broadly based student results consistent with Foothills School Division's and Alberta Education's planning priorities
- provide equity of educational opportunity for all of the students in its attendance area
- develop plans consistent with their own needs that respect Foothills School Division's and Alberta Education's planning priorities
- use empirical and qualitative research to guide educational decisions and to monitor student results
- report on their attainment of Alberta Education, Foothills School Division and school objectives and priorities.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Samples of School Improvement Plans — Edmonton School District No. 7 Eastglen High School

B. Renner, Principal

1996–99 SCHOOL PLAN

School Philosophy

Eastglen holds the belief that most students can do better. Consequently, Grade 10 students are encouraged to register in the more challenging courses in order to test their abilities and keep more doors open for their post-secondary options. Our goal is to achieve maximum potential of all students by encouraging high educational standards and nurturing exemplary citizenship within a secure and supportive environment.

Programs and Organization

In addition to the regular academic program, Eastglen offers an extensive array of career and technology, and fine arts courses. These courses are offered in a combination of full year, semester and Copernican time frames. To meet the needs of students, several special courses have been designed to help students upgrade. Advanced placement, tutorial, study hall and academic assistance programs are well-received. Students value the role of extracurricular activities in their education and participate extensively. Eastglen is well known for producing top-contending athletic teams each year.

Priorities and Plans

Priority:

To improve student achievement in the core subjects with emphases on language arts and mathematics.

Goal:

— By June 1999, 86 per cent of our English 30 students will achieve an acceptable standard and 8 per cent will achieve a standard of excellence. At the same time, 89 per cent of our English 33 students will achieve an acceptable standard and five per cent will achieve a standard of excellence.

— By June 1999, 85 per cent of our Mathematics 30 students and 80 per cent of our Mathematics 33 students will achieve an acceptable standard. Fifteen per cent of our Mathematics 30 students and six per cent of our Mathematics 33 students will achieve a standard of excellence. Students will also achieve significant gains in all other diploma courses.

— By June 1999, there will be a significant increase in the course completion rate for students initially enrolled in diploma examination courses.

1997 – 98 FORECAST

Enrollment

Regular Program	1,157
Mild Special Needs	73
Moderate Special Need	16
Severe Special Needs	4
Total:	**1,250**

Staff FTE

Custodial	7.000
Exempt	1.000
Support	10.000
Teaching	58.587
Total:	**76.587**

School Community Profile

Eastglen is located in the northeast sector of Edmonton and serves students from major feeder schools of Lawton, Highlands and Eastwood. Sixty-four per cent of students come from outside of Eastglen's catchment area.

Plan:

In 1996–97, a standing committee of academic department heads and other interested teachers will meet on a monthly basis to explore ways of enhancing student achievement. The school will continue to actively encourage Grade 10 students to register in the 10-level academic stream but assist students to consider the most academically appropriate stream in Grades 11 and 12. Teachers, counsellors and coordinators will assist inappropriately placed students in changing to a more appropriate program by involving parents and students in the decision. Students entering Eastglen in Grade 10 with an average of 50 to 64 percent will be given additional instructional time in English 10 and Mathematics 10. Extensive scheduled academic tutorial assistance opportunities will be provided for all students. Common midterm exams and final exams will be developed to reflect diploma exam formats. Teachers teaching academic courses will become familiar with the curricular expectations below and above the subject they teach and will be knowledgeable about Grade 12 diploma exams and the analysis of results of Eastglen's diploma results. English marking time and department head time will continue to be provided to ensure that curricular expectations can be met. Teachers will be encouraged to participate in marking provincial diploma exams. The school will increase its supply of basic technology, such as overhead projectors and provide access to computers for writing assignments. The school will assess its current advanced placement program and determine ways of enhancing its desirability. Streams other than the 10, 20, 30 will be presented as having purpose and value. Program needs time will be made available to staff by providing supply teachers so that individual teachers or teams of teachers are able to work on curriculum development. One half of a professional development day will be devoted to assessment strategies. During 1997–98, the school will continue to develop its established emphasis on improving student achievement. Staff will realistically increase student academic expectations in the 10, 20, 30 stream. Teacher-assigned marks will more closely reflect diploma exam marks and students will better understand the expected rigors of this stream. Students will increasingly have opportunities to earn credits in the most appropriate program if they are experiencing unanticipated success or failure in their chosen program.

Indicators:

— diploma results
— student survey results
— parent feedback and survey results.

Goal:

— By June 1999, the number of scholarship winners will increase from 16 to 30.

Plan:

In 1996–97, teachers, counsellors and coordinators will identify, track, assist and nurture potential scholarship winners at the Grade 10 level. All students and parents will be made aware of scholarship opportunities through the counselling department. A school mentorship program will be developed involving counsellors, administrators and teachers. High-achieving students will be recognized by school awards, certificates and administrative communications.

During 1997–98, efforts to recognize high-achieving students will continue through the mentorship program. Permanent school displays and community newspaper advertisements featuring student recognition will be developed.

Indicators:

- number of scholarship recipients
- number of students receiving recognition at school and district awards night
- mentorship program will exist.

Goal:

By June 1999, Eastglen's program for students with special needs will be enhanced.

Plan:

In 1996–97, the learning assistance program will be enhanced. Assigned teacher and program aide time for students with special needs will be sufficient and appropriate. During 1997–98, a 16-level program will be developed in English to better assist students needing a more basic curriculum. Consulting service time will be purchased to help with the development and evaluation of the program.

Indicators:

- formal and informal feedback from students and parents
- teachers express satisfaction that they have instructional support in their teaching of students with special needs.

Goal:

By June 1999, staff and coordinators will continue to emphasize the importance of excellent attendance. Parents will continue to be notified by mail or telephone when student attendance is a concern. In addition, the viability of an automated telephone notification system will be investigated. Students will be assisted in making appropriate course placements. Students experiencing difficulties will receive tutorial support and will be guided into more suitable courses.

Indicators:

- survey results
- retention and attendance records.

Please note that this is only a portion of the plan.

SBDM Practices in Alberta:
Samples of School Improvement Plans:
Wolf Creek Regional Division No. 32, Lacombe Upper Elementary School

Wayne Hampton, Principal

Student Results:
Students' learning will be enhanced by the more effective use of technology in the areas of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

Lacombe Upper Elementary
School Education Plan
1996–97

Parent/Community Results:
Parents will gain understanding and awareness of how technology can be integrated into the education process to make learning more efficient and effective.

School Goals (Year 2 of a five-year goal)

- to assess and enhance the level and use of technology in the teaching/learning process.

Provincial Goal #1 — Focus education on what students need to learn; ensure that high standards are established, communicated and achieved.
Provincial Goal #4 — Improve teaching.

Team Members: Ron Eberts, Jayson Lovell, Ted Jardine, Brian Chapman, Wendy Righi, Maryann Berezan, Sonja Dykslag, Susan Hrycan, Wayne Hampton

What Activities Will Be Undertaken?	Who's Responsible?	By What Date?	How Will it Look? (Evaluation)
Revisit the Needs Assessment conducted in 1995-96 in order to determine what needs have been realized, as well as to identify what needs may have arisen.	Technology Team	October 1996	Addendum to the 1996-97 Needs Assessment report.
Continue to provide inservice to teachers, particularly in the area of integration of technology into specific Programs of Study objectives; the use of HyperCard and Hyper-Studio will be a major priority in this goal.	Technology Team	December 1996 and ongoing	After school sessions; teachers using CD-ROM software with LCD projection in classroom instruction.
Creation of and set up of new computer lab; determine and organize lab for effective use by teachers.	Technology Team Gary Spence	October 1996	Lab operational, with teachers having opportunity to use for direct impact on student learning.
Upgrade of LocalTalk Network to Ethernet.	Technology Team Gary Spence	N Wing — Sept 96 S Wing — late 1997	Network operational, used for file sharing, report cards.
Continue to purchase and evaluate computer hardware and software that will assist in the integration of technology into classroom level instruction.	Technology Team	Ongoing	Additional hardware and software purchased, evaluated and implemented.

Lacombe Upper Elementary School Education Plan 1996–97

Student Results:
Students will be presented with a science program that allows all to successfully participate. Students will acquire an increased level of understanding key concepts. Students will develop a sense of pride in seeing their work displayed.

Parent/Community Results:
Parents/community will realize an increased awareness of students' progress and activities through the observation of displayed student work. There will also be an increased understanding of the skills taught.

School Goal (Year 3 of a three-year goal)

- to complete the successful implementation of the new elementary science curriculum at all levels.

Provincial Goal #1 — Focus education on what students need to learn; ensure that high standards are established, communicated and achieved.
Provincial Goal #4 — Improve teaching.

Team Members: Jayson Lovell, Leanne Walton, Heather Blackmore, Grant Smith, Ron Eberts, Marlene Johnson, Jim Maloney

What Activities Will Be Undertaken?	Who's Responsible?	By What Date?	How Will it Look? (Evaluation)
Establishment of teams to develop units to be shared among all science teachers.	Science Team	September 2: meet and establish teams; October 1: meet and share units/ideas. 1st week — every 2 months	All Grade 6 science teachers will have a wealth of resources and curricular materials.
Review what science demonstration materials are presently available in the school and develop a list of additional materials to purchase.	Science Team	Fall 1996	List of available demonstration materials. List of materials needed to be purchased.
Inservice staff on the new curriculum.	Science Team and Technology Team	Ongoing	All staff well versed with the new curriculum requirements.
Prominent display of student work.	Classroom teachers	Ongoing	Classrooms; bulletin boards; Shoebox Science; Parent/Teacher/Student conferences.
To integrate science and research skills using available science software into the science program at all levels. This will be coordinated in conjunction with the establishment of the new computer lab.	All staff, Administration and Technology Team	Spring 1997	Inservices; increased computer usage for science teaching. Integration of technology into science topics.

(Please note that this is only a portion of the plan.)

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Big Rock School Three-Year Plan, Foothills School Division No. 38

1996–1999

David Zyluk, Principal

Mission Statement: ***"This School is for Kids"***

Three Year Mission: ***"Be proud of yourself and our school"***

Provincial Goal #1	Focus education on what students need to learn; ensure that high standards are established, communicated and achieved.
Jurisdiction Goal #1	To meet the learning needs of students
Note:	Foothills believes its graduates should be literate with respect to language, numeracy, science, culture, technology & the arts.
Big Rock School Goal #1	Fostering high achievement in L.A. across all disciplines.

Objective #1/96:	There will continue to be spelling expectations across all disciplines.
Objective #2/96:	We shall continue to expect students to write/print in complete sentences in all disciplines as appropriate to the student's ability and grade level.
Objective #3/96:	Objectives 1 and 2 will be communicated to all parents by the homeroom teachers in collaboration with other teachers who are teaching the students.
Objective #4/96:	Individual results of the Provincial Achievement Tests will be communicated to the parents of the students who wrote them in the previous year.
Objective #5/96:	We shall continue to share the School Profile results of the Provincial Achievement Tests with our School Council.
Objective #6/96:	All of the Big Rock Teaching Staff will review our reporting format and design with Divisional Standards a "Big Rock" reporting format. This will be given some trial runs and reviewed with Divisional Office and our School Council.

Objective #7/96: In the Fall of 1997, the Big Rock School Reporting Format will be standardized, based on the research from the previous school year.

Objective #8/96: Big Rock School will present an annual report to the school community for the fall of 1997.

Objective #9/96: The School Council along with the school's administration and staff will review the school's volunteer handbook and revise it as necessary.

Objective #10/96: The front entrance of the school will be made more inviting.

Provincial Goal #4 Improve Teaching

Jurisdiction Goal #4 To optimize the use of the division's human resources. Our focus will be on a commitment to the improvement of teaching practice.

Big Rock School Goal #4 The administrators, staff and community of Big Rock School shall continue to be supportive of each other and be advocates for our students.

Objective #1/96: All teachers will have on file personal professional development plans.

Objective #2/96: Professional development will become more of a focus at staff meetings.

Objective #3/96: The principal is responsible for teacher evaluation and *will* complete all evaluations, as required by policy, during the year required, unless the evaluation plan shows an extension into the following school year. This plan must be agreed to between teacher and principal and be on file in the office.

Objective #4/96: Staff will read the book *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms* by Carol Ann Tomlinson.

Please note that this is not the complete plan for Big Rock School.

Millarville Community School is in Foothills School Division. It has 245 students ECS to Grade 8.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Millarville Community School Plan, Foothills School Division No. 38 1996-1997

Tony Hampshire, Principal

Goal 1: Continue to meet the needs of all students by:

- directing resources to focus upon students with exceptional needs (moderate/severe learning and behavioural, gifted/talented)
- implementation of revised course scheduling (jr. high complementary / CTS courses trimestered; Grade 4–6 fine arts time blocks)
- clarifying responses & procedures for students with severe Health conditions; i.e., Anaphyaxis

Alignment with FSD Strategic Goals:

FSD Goal #1: Meeting the Learning Needs of Students
FSD Goal #3: Building Trust and Confidence
FSD Goal #4: Optimize the use of Facility Resources

Indicators of Success

- positive student growth in learning assistance
- improved choice and access for complementary/CTS courses
- clear protocol established for emergency health incidents
- increased attention to better meeting learning needs of gifted/talented students
- positive perceptions from staff, parents, school council.

Goal 2: Enhance the physical learning environment through:

- addition of permanent graphics displays
- continue to expand displays of student art
- preliminary consideration of relocatable classroom and gym configurations.

Alignment with FSD Strategic Goals:

FSD Goal #4: Optimize the use of Facility Resources
FSD Goal #3: Building Trust and Confidence

Indicators of Success

- graphics displays installed by June '97
- additional accommodations for framed art work
- rotating display with ESSO corporate office

- positive perceptions from staff, parents, school council
- growing staff and school council consensus regarding configurations of relocatables/gym expansion.

Goal 3: Improve the use of educational technology by:

- Establishing a staff/parent technology advisory council
- Providing teacher release time to resolve hardware/software issues and to foster collaboration
- Increased provision of elementary/jr. high language learning software
- Encourage use of 286 laptops
- Increased access to, and use of, the Internet.

Alignment with FSD Strategic Goals:

FSD Goal #2: Facilitate the development of technologically competent and adaptable staff and students

FSD Goal #1: Meeting the Learning Needs of Students

FSD Goal #4: Optimize the use of Facility Resources

Indicators of Success

- upper elementary/jr. high students have software that better meets language arts curriculum objectives
- hardware/software failure rates are manageable
- a majority of Grade 6 students use technology to write their provincial language arts achievement test
- staff collaboration and use of technology is enhanced
- MCS achieves an actual computer/student ratio of 4:1
- technology advisory council guides and clarifies various issues (use, access, purchasing, Internet)
- significant increase in student and staff Internet use
- construction and launch of an MCS Internet Home Page on the Internet (ESSO assistance).

SBDM Practices in SBDM in Alberta: University Elementary School, Calgary School District No. 19

Sylvia Mutch, Principal

Describe What You Did in the School/Jurisdiction

University Elementary School (UES) has strong strategic planning processes in place. Through these processes, we have introduced annual internal and external scanning with all stakeholders. A highlight has been bringing parents together to share their ideas and to provide feedback on what we are doing. Many parents want to be better informed and to become more knowledgeable about new ways of working, teaching and thinking. Strategic scanning provides: opportunities to inform, opportunities to celebrate and the elicitation of new issues from continuous improvement. These new issues then become the basis for planning and for action in the new school term. Parents and students are invited to join some of the appropriate planning and actioning of continuous improvement.

Scanning Process

- opportunities to inform.
- opportunities to celebrate.
- elicit new issues for continuous improvement.

The emphasis on the continuous improvement dimension is paralleled in the second of our processes and that is the practice of total quality management philosophy. UES is a school of quality and belongs to a network of schools in Canada and USA, Britain and Australia. We also follow the work of Peter Senge as a learning organization and build community following Peck's criteria.

Our Calgary Board of Education has been redesigned into collaborative learning communities. UES believes thoroughly in the premises and principles of collaboration and community.

Critical Elements of SBDM

The organization of the school into three multi-age learning communities provides a structure for collaborative teams of five teachers and cooperative learners across the grades. This provides the set up for planning, team learning, building shared vision through continual dialogue among colleagues on the job, about the work and in the context of doing and being.

A constructivist view of teaching and learning brings all voices, experiences and generative thinking into the design of the work.

Knowledge of practice around total quality management, the learning organization and community building provides value-added guidance.

A commitment to personal growth and development is an essential element in every staff member. Teachers must want to be decision makers and problem solvers. They must want to spend the extra time that SBDM takes. Teachers become risk takers beyond the immediate role of teaching. An ability to be a system thinker and to recognize the value of interdependence as necessary for the good of the whole – beyond their own classroom is a new paradigm for many educators. At UES, staff are offered opportunities for decisions about everything on a continuum from advice to collaboration and facilitation. Acceptance of shared leadership is not automatic if preceded by years of traditional compliance. Knowledge of change, even supported through a plethora of literature, is not the same as living in it and adapting through it. SBDM is onerous although productive.

Factors that Assisted the Process at UES

These processes are modeled at the system level and in many business operations. Parents are becoming familiar with the language of strategic planning and with the continuous improvement practices and principles of total quality.

The whole concept of teamwork and collaborative learning is the premise of our organizational structures and timetabling. The mission statement (pages 34–35) translates into observable practice and is measurable as outcomes. We model cooperative ways of working and students are grouped in multi-aged communities to establish the community view of learners.

If We Did it Again, What Would We Do Differently?

This is an ongoing way of life and work at UES. We will not return to single classes and individuals going in different directions. We will continue to meet and talk and plan together. The strategic way of thinking fits with the inclusion and integration of students and the interdisciplinary design of our teaching. Quality learning will always be our ultimate outcome. We will continue to select staff who want to employ a systems view of practice and planning. We will encourage parents to be cognizant of new practices and supporting literature. We will engage parents and stakeholders in dialogue more often as time permits. These are some of the things we did and would do more of: keep more people informed, keep communicating with other schools, seek supportive understanding colleagues: we wish we had written and published our great stores of success sooner.

Process Model of Scanning

Prepare data collection tools

Alert stakeholders to intent and set up meetings

Conduct business meetings – collect data, reiterate decision-making and governance continuums, strategic plan context, discipline

Synthesize and categorize data

Prepare and publish strategic document

Conduct a series of discussion opportunities

Prepare implementation options

Prepare scenarios

Action strategic directions

Benefits in the process at UES

Benefits have included a great cohesiveness among staff. Our many visitors comment on:

- the dynamic learning atmosphere
- the on-task behaviour of students
- the focus on learning observable everywhere
- the involvement and ownership of everyone
- the spirit and esprit in the air
- the quality of work and dialogue
- interesting and vital products and displays around the school
- the cohesiveness of everyone going in the same direction
- the risk-free learning and teaching environment
- shared leadership and collaborative decision making in evidence

Our Mission — Strategies We are Using to Translate Our Mental Models Into Observable Results:

Build a Strong Foundation of Knowledge

- collaborate - among students, teachers and parents
- design, construct and organize a variety of learning environments
- diversify instruction and assessment
- teach and learn contextually
- build self-esteem and self-confidence in one's ability to respond to challenges
- build trust in others, knowing they are willing to give their support
- hire experienced and knowledgeable teachers and administrators who are lifelong learners
- practise a philosophy of inclusive education by developing the capacities of all students
- access mentors, experts, information and experiences
- develop information strategies to enhance visual, media and technological literacy

Inspire a Passion for Learning

- link our professional learning about multiple intelligences to our teaching
- provide opportunities for sharing learning within communities and across the school
- respond to student passions by creating opportunities for each student to make choices and to explore special interests, thus encouraging students' self-directed learning
- build on and share teachers' strengths and passions
- engage creativity and imagination in all learning
- construct curriculum through the big questions of history, science, literature, mathematics, art, music
- develop students that emerge from and are directed by students' questions
- provide access to ways of thinking and to knowledge that helps students understand the world as well as challenge it

Challenge Perceived Boundaries

- take learning beyond the immediate curriculum or first level thinking about curriculum to higher levels
- apply social constructivist learning principles
- learn about generative curriculum and beyond
- develop our school council

- challenge ourselves as teachers and parents with new ideas and ways of working
- diagnose and share learning styles
- design approaches to strengthen learning modalities
- increase student self-evaluation practices, including use of rubrics, portfolio development, conference and goal setting
- work with students in flexible groupings
- align our work within and across learning communities through our strategic thinking and planning
- participate actively to develop our collaborative learning community within the Calgary Board of Education

Design Active Research

- inquire collaboratively into questions about the impact of creative arts on student learning
- examine and offer options regarding our University of Calgary connections: teacher-researcher courses at our school, and other collaborative research possibilities
- engage in standardization testing
- pilot programs or materials
- publish and present findings
- ask big questions and probe for new insights
- apply principles of quality
- network with quality schools
- network with the Centre for Leadership in Learning

Improve Continuously

- improve by seeking advice, reading research and reflecting on personal teaching practices
- involve everyone in betterment of practice and performance through shared leadership
- examine our broad-based assessment tools, tracking of students and aspects of student self-evaluation
- maintain a public commitment to accountability for the educative consequences of our beliefs, values and actions
- revisit/revise our technology plan using the mission statement
- apply cognitive coaching
- pilot University of Calgary evaluation forms
- take part in monthly PD sessions plus ad hoc sessions
- make personal professional reading and growth opportunities
- share educational articles
- revisit early literacy learning through system initiatives

Seek Safe, Open Learning Environments

- be open to shared power and interest-based decision making
- listen actively
- respect individual opinions
- build relationships
- accept and manage diversity
- understand and value our different personality types and our students (True Colors)
- continue to integrate a wide range of special needs students
- include ESL students of varying language categories in all learning communities
- continue commitment to a team teaching model C open for teachers to work together
- include a before- and after-school care program
- maintain zero tolerance for aggressive behaviour causing stress in others
- take action and evaluate from a base of knowledge and understanding
- promote autonomy, efficacy and trust

University Elementary School, 1996/97

Workshop Idea #12: Focus on Teaching and Learning

This workshop helps school groups identify specific local issues that have an impact on student learning, as a first step in planning for improvement.

Purpose:	to analyze the current teaching/learning situation to identify critical areas for improvement to relate the work to the school improvement plans.
Material:	school improvement plan, handouts, chart paper
Time:	2 hours

Opener Activity

Have each participant complete the following statement (three ideas):

> In our school/jurisdiction, in order to improve instruction and enhance student achievement, I believe that . . .

In small groups, discuss the ideas and chart the common beliefs. Present to the large group and discuss the common ideas. Many of them will focus on working together, sharing resources and other SBDM concepts.

Exploring the Issues

"Primary" specific staff activities that affect student learning:

Participants first individually, and then in small groups (using the format provided), highlight a few of the activities in a discussion. Possibilities include: consistent expectations, teacher professional development, curriculum planning, budget and resource allocation, teacher behaviour, student evaluation, school vision and goal setting, school and class organization and structure, and administrator behaviour.

"Secondary" school activities that affect student learning:

Repeat the process described above. An illustration of possible activities: parental support, extracurricular activities, school routines and physical structures, community involvement, and volunteers and fundraising.

Problems and obstacles that affect student learning:

Repeat the process, focusing on problems and obstacles. Examples might include: integration without support, problems at home, increased class size, inconsistent expectations of achievement, social issues (hunger, violence), teachers not working as a team to share resources or solve planning problems, no cohesiveness between curricular planning between grades and inappropriate resources.

Identification of Significant Issues

Examine the three sets of factors to arrive at a set of conditions or issues that could be the basis of a plan to improve student learning.

Possible techniques:

- For the obstacles:
  - how big a problem is it? (1–5)
  - how much control or influence do you have over it? (1–5)

  Choose the ones that rate highest on both scales.
- For the activities:
  - how significant a change is possible? (1–5)
  - how much control do you have over it? (1–5)

Examples of this grid are provided. (Workshop #12 — Worksheet #1)

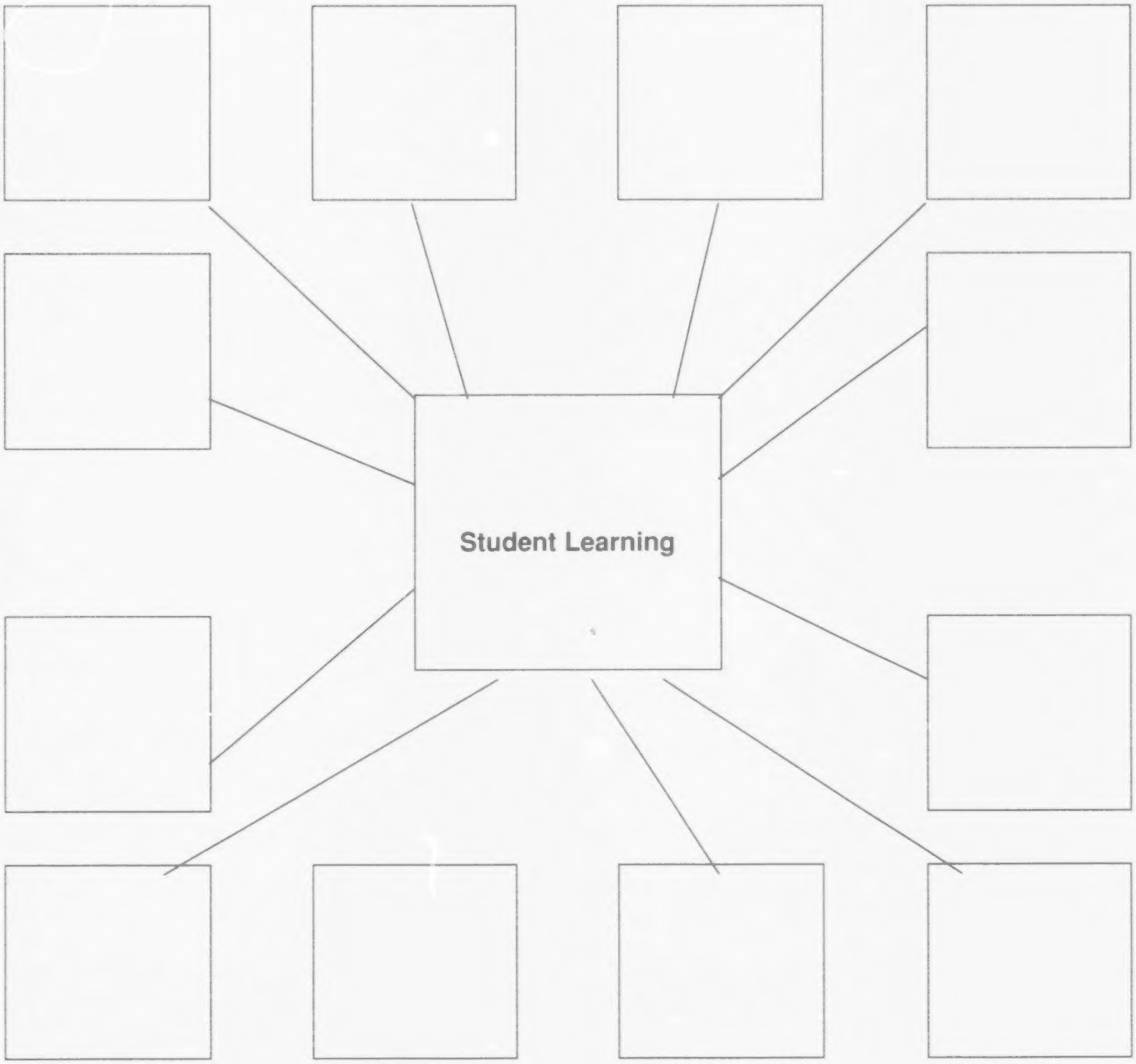
Planning for Improvement

Develop plans for improvement which consider:

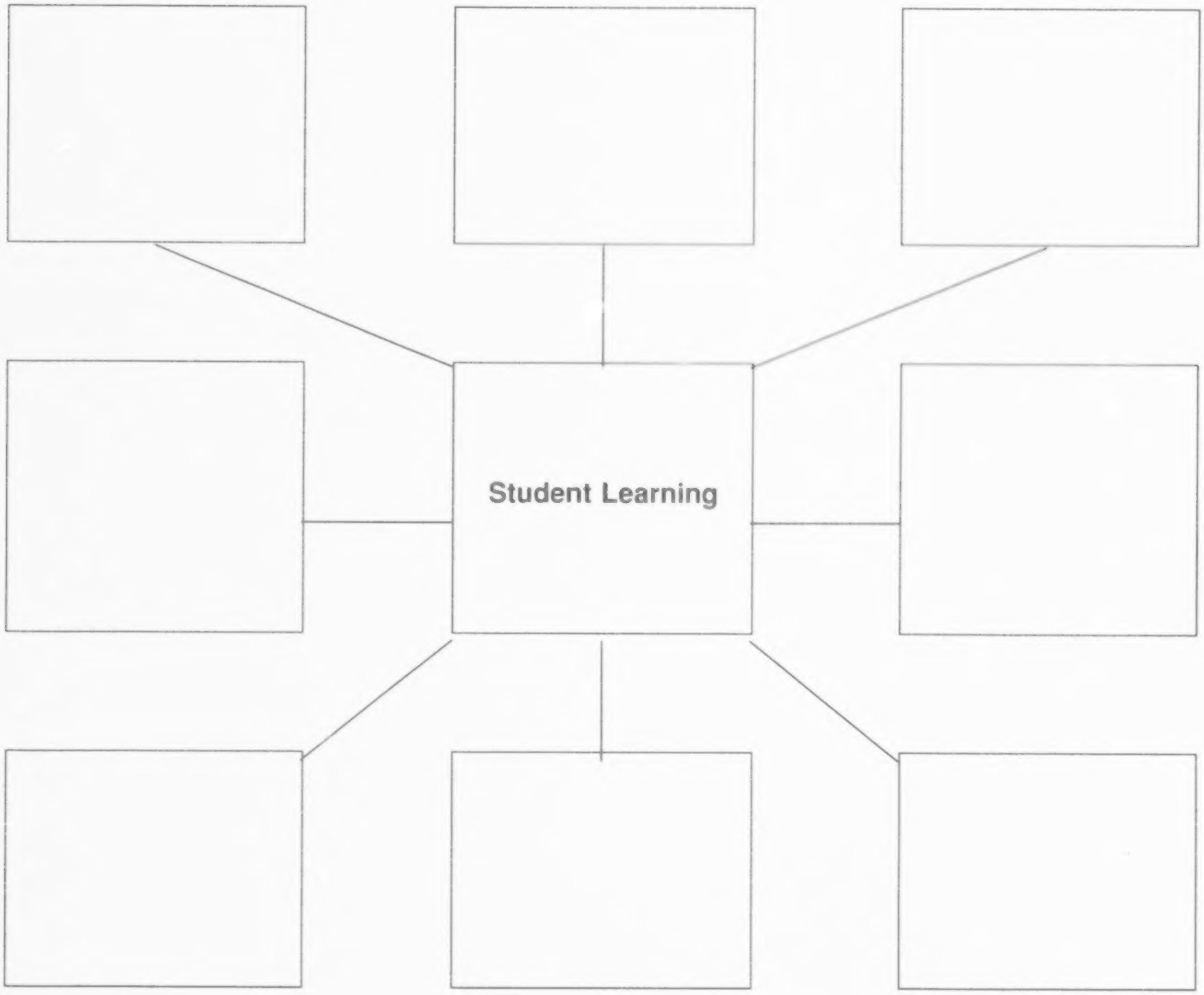
- using teamwork and team philosophy
- developing a coherent structure for school activities
- extending the structure outside the school
- looking for other resources; using your resources differently.

The staff should work out a detailed plan which should be incorporated into the school improvement plan.

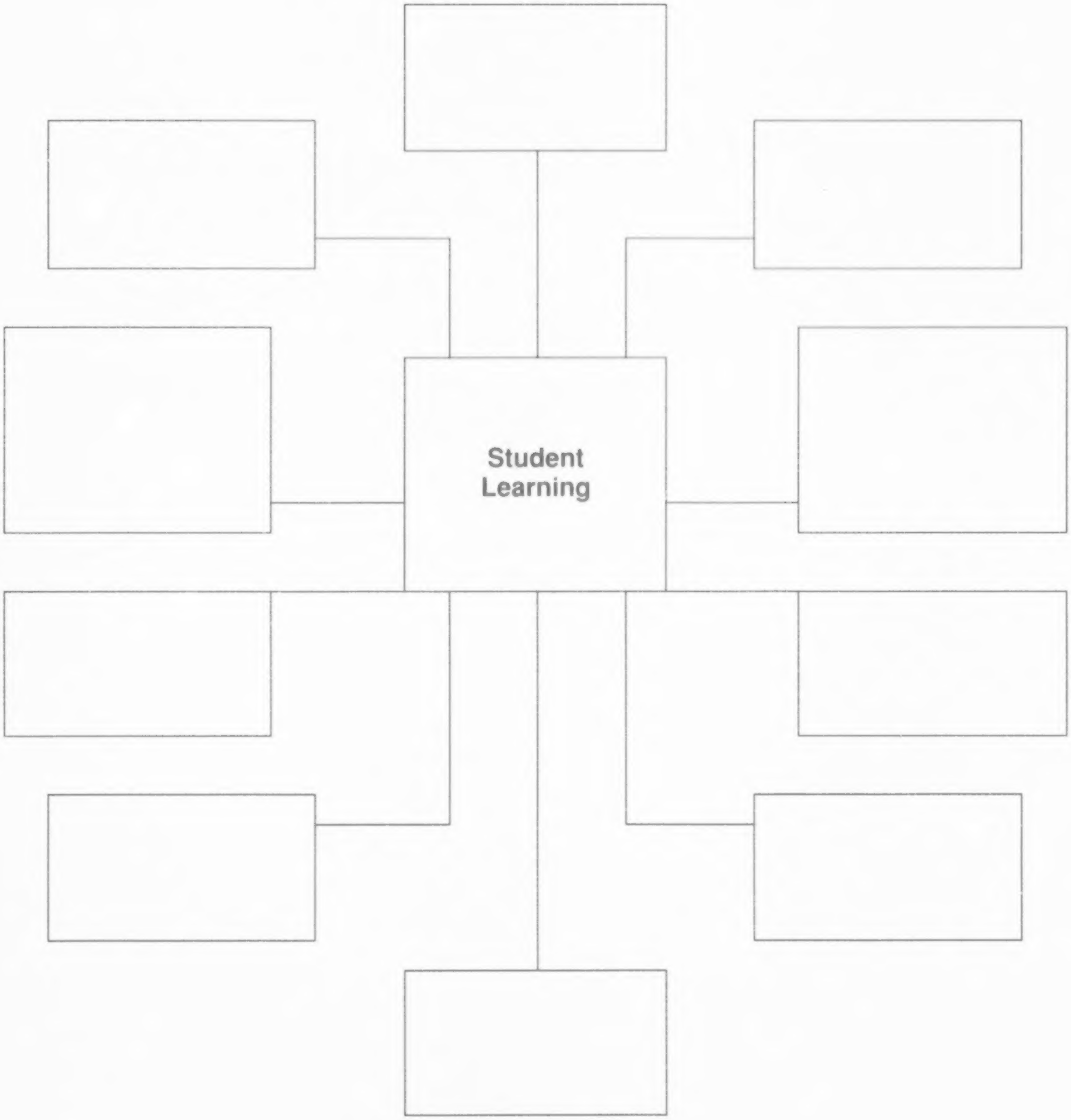
Workshop #12 — Worksheet #1: "Primary" Specific Staff Activities That Affect It



Workshop #12 — Worksheet #2: "Secondary" School Activities That Affect It



Workshop #12 — Worksheet #3: Problems/Obstacles



Workshop #12 — Worksheet #4: School Profile

Problems/obstacles to group processes in SBDM:

How big a problem is each of the following?
Problem/obstacle 1. No Problem .... 5. Extreme Problem

1. Increased number of student needs	1	2	3	4	5
2. Pupil/teacher ratio (class size)	1	2	3	4	5
3. No support for integration of special needs students	1	2	3	4	5
4. No consistency among staff members in their expectations for student achievement	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teacher evaluation policy treats teachers as isolated individuals and does not have criteria to recognize their contributions to school goals as team members	1	2	3	4	5
6. Staff members are afraid to take risks and try creative approaches because of the reactions of the rest of the staff or parents	1	2	3	4	5
7. Staff members are afraid to critique each other's teaching methods	1	2	3	4	5
8. Staff members are reluctant to visit each other's classrooms in order to observe	1	2	3	4	5
9. Staff members do not share resources (teaching, materials or units they developed, good ideas, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
10. No coherence or continuity in curriculum planning between grades and/or between feeder schools	1	2	3	4	5

Workshop #12 — Worksheet #5:

Problem solving potential:

How much control/influence do you estimate you have over these problems?
Problem/obstacle 1. No Control .... 5. Complete Control

1. Increased number of student needs	1	2	3	4	5
2. Pupil/teacher ratio (class size)	1	2	3	4	5
3. No support for integration of special needs students	1	2	3	4	5
4. No consistency among staff members in their expectations for student achievement	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teacher evaluation policy treats teachers as isolated individuals and does not have criteria to recognize their contributions to school goals as team members	1	2	3	4	5
6. Staff members are afraid to take risks and try creative approaches because of the reactions of the rest of the staff or parents	1	2	3	4	5
7. Staff members are afraid to critique each other's teaching methods	1	2	3	4	5
8. Staff members are reluctant to visit each other's classrooms in order to observe	1	2	3	4	5
9. Staff members do not share resources (teaching, materials or units they developed, good ideas, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
10. No coherence or continuity in curriculum planning between grades and/or between feeder schools	1	2	3	4	5

Workshop #12 — Worksheet #6

Change potential:

How significant a change do you estimate is possible in each of these primary activities?
Activity 1. No Change .... 5. Complete Change Possible

1. Administrator behaviour, roles, responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
2. Teacher behaviour, role, responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
3. School policies	1	2	3	4	5
4. Physical plant and timetable	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teacher evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
6. Student evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
7. Professional development	1	2	3	4	5
8. Curriculum planning	1	2	3	4	5
9. School planning	1	2	3	4	5
10. School vision and goal setting	1	2	3	4	5
11. Budgeting and resource allocation	1	2	3	4	5

How significant a change do you estimate is possible in each of these secondary activities?
Activity 1. No Change .... 5. Complete Change Possible

1. Relationship with central office	1	2	3	4	5
2. Parental support	1	2	3	4	5
3. Relationship with feeder schools	1	2	3	4	5
4. Fund raising	1	2	3	4	5
5. Partnership with university	1	2	3	4	5
6. Community involvement, volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
7. Relationship with other social agencies	1	2	3	4	5

How much control/influence do you estimate you have over these secondary activities?
Activity 1. No Control .... 5. Complete Control

1. Relationship with central office	1	2	3	4	5
2. Parental support	1	2	3	4	5
3. Relationship with feeder schools	1	2	3	4	5
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5. Partnership with university	1	2	3	4	5
6. Community involvement, volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
7. Relationship with other social agencies	1	2	3	4	5

Chapter 7

Connecting Vision and Budget

School-Based Decision Making Resource Guide:

Focus on Teaching and Learning

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Connecting Vision and Budget

Focus Article

Tested in Alberta

Workshop Idea

Chapter Seven

Introduction

Many Alberta jurisdictions have developed comprehensive sections in their school-based decision-making manuals which focus on school-based budgets. This chapter is neither a complete examination of that process, a set of detailed formulas and calculations, nor a budget book with forms and samples. It simply highlights some important steps in the process.

The focus article by Marc Prefontaine examines the critical connections among vision, plans and budgets. The second focus article by Tom Olson outlines the steps and some formulas that school jurisdictions may use in determining a school-based budget process and outlines the processes used in Parkland School Division.

There are samples of budget principles from jurisdictions and some budget responsibility decisions.

The workshop idea in this chapter is designed to assist school jurisdictions in creating or recreating budget principles and processes.

Bringing Vision and Budget Together

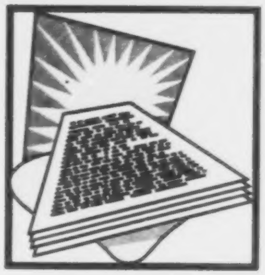
Marc Prefontaine, District Principal, Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional Jurisdiction No. 29

To many it is paradoxical to maintain that the vision of a school jurisdiction and its budget are one and the same. This is a view which has been ascribed to secretaries-treasurer but not to *the real people* who inhabit school systems. It is in implementation of site-based decision making that the reality with which secretaries-treasurer have been guiding jurisdictions has come home as never before to site-based personnel.

The literature is largely silent on the issue of realizing vision through budgeting. Richard Neal (*School-Based Management 1991*) is an exception in that he devotes extensive time to the issue of budget in the total picture of school-based decision making. The key is the determination of the guiding principles for the budget process:

- How extensive are the funds that will be distributed to schools?
- For what purposes will the funds be provided?
- What funds will be retained at the jurisdictional level and for what purposes?
- How much authority should accompany those funds?
- How much flexibility in spending will schools be given?
- How will schools decide how to spend those funds?
- Will schools be allowed the ability to pool funds for their own reasons?
- What are the expectations of the different stakeholders?
- Who has the final responsibility in determining spending?
- How do we relate spending plans or budgets to educational plans?

It is clear that a jurisdiction must initiate the processes of planning and budgeting. Following the establishment of certain shared decisions, the data and processes are passed along to schools which will, in turn, interpret their own realities which have been consensually derived by all participants. At the school level, similar processes which involve stakeholders will determine the plans and the budgets which support them.



Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional District includes St. Albert, Legal and Morinville. It has 17 schools serving 7,213 students

Common Budget Principles:

- connects to the vision
- resources allocated to schools on an equitable basis
- flexibility in planning and operation of the budget
- method of allocation to be kept as simple as possible
- opportunities for input by parents, teachers, students and school councils
- decisions consistent with district vision and priorities.

First Steps

First in a long chain of steps, must be a tacit agreement within a jurisdiction that it will seek common understanding and implementation of site-based decision making by adhering to certain overriding values. One value is an affirmation that the people within the organization are as worthy of consideration as are the people it serves. Another overriding value to be affirmed at the outset of the process, is the degree of identity which will be retained by the members of the jurisdiction in a process which actively seeks to decentralize decision making. Is there dedication to the gestalt of the school system, or is there a desire to win at the expense of one's colleagues?

With an agreement on the overriding values of the jurisdiction, and with the delineation of the mission and vision statements to declare the distinct purpose for the existence and the state to which the system aspires, the jurisdiction must turn next to establishing a structure to support its movement into site-based decision making. A strategic plan is required. It must include both a set of tasks which will lead to attainment of the vision and a framework of people who will carry out those tasks. The people involved must agree to consider the needs of the system before the needs of the sites which they represent in the process. In at least one jurisdiction (Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional Division), this need to consider everyone's needs was underlined by a mass transfer of administrators to other schools in the jurisdiction following the culmination of the planning process at the jurisdiction level. The transfers, which were arrived at mutually, underscored the beliefs that individuals had in consideration of each others' situations.

It is desirable that the groups charged with planning be representative of every site within the jurisdiction. The variety of stakeholders involved must be carefully determined to allow full involvement throughout the process. Jurisdictions are cautioned to ensure that resources are in place to allow full participation over time by representatives. A combination of individuals and committees is suggested. Boards of trustees and superintendents do not relinquish their role in the process. It is only when it is agreed that individual changes will occur that they do occur. Until there is a plan which is approved, the organization conducts business as usual.

To provide some idea of how the structure for this process might look, the following serves as an illustration.

- The board of trustees endorses the process and vision. They are involved in understanding the implications of the process across the jurisdiction and setting policy which supports it.
- The superintendent retains his or her role of establishing the parameters for the process and as liaison with the board of trustees. He or she consults with the stakeholders to determine their commitment and suggestions.

Steps in School-Based Budgeting

- Determine vision and purpose of jurisdiction.
- Determine the goals.
- Establish a budget committee representing all stakeholders.
- Determine budget principles.
- Determine "off-the-top" allocation.
- Determine funding distribution model:
  - weighting factor
  - small school factor
  - based on equity.

I define school-based management or decentralization as the devolution of important decision-making authority to the school level. When 75 to 85 per cent of district revenues are allocated to schools, you have real decentralization.

—Daniel J. Brown, "The Sabotage of School-Based Management," *The School Administrator* (March 1995)

- A central committee chaired by the superintendent coordinates the process. It also monitors the work of all involved and seeks to ensure consistency over time with movement toward. the vision of the jurisdiction.
- A committee of chairs meets with the central committee to share the work of several committees as the work is accomplished. It plans how best to communicate with all participants in the process and how to support them in operationalizing the agreements.
- Various standing committees establish mandates for tasks through consultation with the central committee. The focus is on sharing the burden of work to be done to avoid undue expectations that any one site will have to accomplish more than its resources permit. These committees consist of representatives from the sites in the system. They are charged with consulting stakeholders in the achievement of their work, which includes the preparation of materials to aid their colleagues in bringing the realities of site-based decision making home to their staffs and colleagues.
- The use of ad hoc committees to meet and provide recommendations to the standing committees in the process allows for the meaningful extension of site-based decision making beyond the membership of the planning framework. This is the ideal place for inclusion of parents, community or school council representatives in the process.
- A regular meeting of all members of the standing committees allows the group to integrate and assimilate the work at hand. Again, members of this gathering reinforce the integration of consideration of site needs and jurisdictional needs in dealing with the communication and consultation necessary to bring completed work to the schools in the jurisdiction. In a larger jurisdiction, members of this group would meet with standing groups from their geographic place in the jurisdiction to continue the process of dissemination and consultation.
- The various sites in the division regularly set time aside (which is facilitated by the jurisdiction) to examine the aspects of site-based decision making that are more removed from them and the application of principles, including the ability to effectively work in teams.

Resource Determination First

In moving from vision to budget, the question arises: Which comes first, the educational plan or the budget plan? In Alberta, the budget plan is determined first, though never without an eye to what might be required in the educational plan. This pattern follows from the order in which the province releases its information (budget first, educational plan second). In an era of more abundant resources, the freedom to plan first and then set resources behind those plans was a luxury which is unavailable to the modern educational system. Now jurisdictions and schools provide for the needs of their students within the resources available to them. It is apparent that jurisdictions must communicate this reality to their stakeholders early in the process of establishing school-based decision making or face a host of unrequited expectations and attendant frustrations.

As most jurisdictions are well along the way to implementing site-based decision making, the benefit of the list provided in the example is a check that all parts of the process are in order. They should be annually reaffirmed by all involved, though the trustees of a jurisdiction need only approve the guiding principles and basis for allocation with that frequency. Within a jurisdiction, it is a reasonable expectation that any member of the administration, whether centrally- or school-situated, should be able to present and support any of these essentials with their stakeholders. The ability to do so can be viewed as a test of the integrity of the framework and mechanics in place in the budgetary process. As a corollary, the ability of school staff members and school council to speak knowledgeably about the basis for allocation as it affects them would be a true affirmation of the system's effectiveness, as would that individual's ability to identify at least one point in the process where he or she would have the opportunity to voice concerns about budget decisions made outside the site.

What are the essentials to be established in the budget process? Taken from a site-based decision making point of view, they are:

- the rules of the game or how these decisions will be made
- the division of roles between central office and schools which impacts budget (and educational planning)
- the framework of individuals/committees who will undertake the related tasks
- the principles which will guide the division of funds (guiding principles)
- the determination of how the jurisdictional allocations can best be arranged into school allocations (basis for allocation).

Example: Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional School District No. 29

The excerpts which follow are examples of each of the essential elements described in the preceding section of this article. They are intended primarily for jurisdictions which have not yet developed them. For jurisdictions which have determined such essentials, they can serve as a contrast and source of new ideas.

Rules of the Game

The following statements are intended to serve as a guide in the evolution of the school's plan. Further development and implementation of components must be consistent with and contribute to the division's mission, vision and other guiding statements.

Results

- The welfare of students and their academic achievement remains the primary focus of the planning process.
- Planning is developed in accordance with the division's mission, vision, values and beliefs, the three-year plan, board priorities and key strategies.
- Delegation of authority to the schools and commensurate funding is maximized.
- Level and quality of stakeholder involvement is maximized.
- The most effective and efficient use of funds is made.
- Community participation, enrollment and support for the division is maximized.
- The budget is approved by the board of trustees.

Requirements

- The process is understood, accepted and supported by the board, staff, students, parents and the community.
- The school three-year plan is extended annually and is developed in the context of the division's three-year plan.
- The framework ensures that schools (trustees, parents, staff, students and community) have the flexibility to address local student and school needs.

- The board will annually approve the:
  - principles of allocation.
  - distribution of funds between the schools, and division services and operations.
  - basis for allocations.
  - key strategies.
  - achievement and level of satisfaction targets
  - planning framework ⊂ results and requirements.
- The appropriate involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process is clearly understood and provided for.
- The school plan will contain:
  - a profile of the school
  - issues, trends, future directions
  - a description of the planning process and stakeholder involvement
  - school-level strategies to address division strategies as prescribed
  - accompanying measures and targets
  - deployment of funds.
- The school plan is submitted by the principal to the superintendent for review and approval.
- The basis for resource allocation ensures equitability to achieve division and program results, and maximize individual student learning.
- The plan accurately reflects the projected costs of meeting the identified educational requirements of students and costs of supporting services.
- The authority to propose plans and expend funds is in accordance with the division role and responsibility statements.
- The deployment of funds is developed and recorded in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
- The degree of operational flexibility within the allocation is clearly defined.
- A procedure and mechanism for amending, on a monthly basis, the approved budget for both results and resources is established.
- Requested data by division services is relevant, timely and not repetitious.

- Schools are provided a monthly financial management summary.
- The financial status of each school (surpluses and deficits) is monitored and reported by the superintendent to the board on a quarterly basis.
- Amortized purchases are approved by the board and monitored by the superintendent.
- Internal and external revenues, rentals, instructional material fees and other school-generated funds are accounted for in accordance with division directives.
- The school plan provides the basis for the determination of individual staff member plans and performance objectives.
- A results review process is established, providing appropriate involvement of stakeholders.
- All requirements of Alberta Education pertaining to planning, programming and accountability are met.
- The preparation of documents maximizes use of computer technology.
- The process is reviewed annually, providing opportunity for input from all stakeholder groups.

Whereas the above statements have been developed for schools, with appropriate amendments, they are equally applicable to division and instructional support services.

Guiding Principles of Allocation

- The board of trustees is responsible for allocating funds to schools on an equitable basis that recognizes their similarities and differences.
- The allocation of resources to schools is a collaborative process that provides for the appropriate involvement of school and senior administrations.
- The allocation will consist of three components:
  - Basic — This will represent the majority of funds distributed to schools. An equal amount for each student in Grades 1–12 will be distributed to each school.
  - Additional Factors — This component recognizes the difference among schools and includes factors such as small schools, French Immersion and special needs students.
  - Special Consideration — This component will be used to ensure equity in circumstances not addressed through the formula.
- Unexpended instructional funds that are centrally held as contingencies will be distributed to schools subsequent to a year-end audit.

- School administration, in consultation with parents and staff, will determine how to expend the school allocation to best meet the needs of all students and the results identified in the school plan.
- Funds generated at the school level through fees and fundraising are not part of the school's basic allocation but will be subject to appropriate documentation and accounting procedures.
- Funds allocated to school jurisdictions for plant and operations may become part of the school's basic allocation.
- The amount of the allocation to individual schools and divisional office units is public information.
- Formula used to calculate the allocation of resources to schools shall be reviewed annually with appropriate stakeholder involvement.

Basis for Allocation

Revenues per student include basic revenue, French grants, special education and ECS grants.

Student enrollment includes:

- High school students are counted as 1 FTE = 35 CEU's (adjustments to schools are made as information is received)
- Elementary and junior high students = 1 student
- ECS students = 0.5 students
- Virtual students = refer to manual

Basic allocations per student include:

ECS	1,476.00
Elementary	3,225.84
Junior High	3,225.84
Senior High	92.16/CEU
Moderate Needs	9,000.00
Severe Needs	17,500.00
ECS Mild/Moderate	1,360.00
Gifted	1,000.00
ESL	644.00
Home School	990.00
LRDC Credit	9.30

Off the Top (funds pooled for redistribution) per student include:

Special Education	345.00
ECS	117.43
Instructional/ School Support	29.50
Small School/ Program	79.46
Personnel Contingency	31.50
Division Initiatives	15.67
Technology Plan	20.20

Based on an analysis of the school-based decision making manuals from 35 school jurisdictions:

Common School-Based Expenditures:

- Teacher salaries
- Support salaries
- Instructional supplies and equipment
- Substitute costs (up to 3–5 days)
- Office supplies
- Extracurricular costs
- Field trips
- Professional development
- Telephone, postage
- Rental agreements
- School council costs.

Common "Off-the-Top" Decisions

- Sabbatical leave
- Reading intervention
- Early retirements
- Learning resources credit
- Copyright
- Special needs contingency
- Curriculum support
- Special needs consultants
- Testing services
- Central substitute pool
- Professional development
- Instructional services

Timeline

Step One
Committee work has been undertaken to prepare positions and recommendations on several issues. Parent newsletter surveys have sought opinions and beliefs on several issues.

Step Two
Staff will review the information collected and recommend strategies. Relative priorities will be discussed.

Step Three
Parents will review the information collected and recommend strategies. Relative priorities will be discussed.

Step Four
Staff will select from the alternatives reviewed, recommended and proposed. Priorities will be determined.

Step Five
School council will review the proposed budget plan.

Step Six
Staff will review the proposed budget plan.

Step Seven
The budget plan is submitted to the superintendent.

Step Eight
Basic elements of the budget plan are communicated in the newsletter.

School Level Budgeting

What happens when the allocations are determined and passed along to the school level? Many school communities feel frustrated if faced with a need to construct a budget with funding less than they would like and indications that some of those funds have been pooled for the use of other schools. A plan for dealing with the situation is an important contribution which a jurisdiction might provide for the school team. The processes for site-based decision making provided in this guide address this need. The next section is a sample of information which might be utilized at the school level.

Our school community is charged with the task of setting a budget to support goals and strategies which originate from outside the school; i.e., at the provincial and divisional levels, as well as those which we will determine ourselves.

This process mirrors the one which the division has undertaken in reacting to the province's grant and planning documents. It has been set in place to improve the education students receive today and to draw the school's partners together more closely in supporting students who attend our school.

Decision Making vs Involvement

Parents and staff addressed their relative roles in the planning process. The government and our division provided direction, and members of our school council and staff endorsed an approach which seems to fit the model proposed for this process as well. Participation in decision making stems from the application of the following matrix.

Expertise	Stake	Role
low	low	informed about decisions
high	low	generate alternative solutions to an issue
low	high	review and recommend from the alternatives provided
high	high	select from the alternatives

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Process

Some agreements are necessary to provide proper perspective to this exercise. As it comes in addition to the work that everyone has to do, the scope of involvement is limited intentionally in terms of time spent. Every step is intended to be a stride forward. Steps cannot be revised, though content may well be. Parties take responsibility for their own work.

Some divisional strategies are addressed in novel ways as they receive high priorities and some are addressed in much the same ways as in the past. This type of decision occurs in the priority setting component of the process. Manageability of people's efforts is key in terms of defining the final budget. It is accepted that educating students is more important than making everyone so busy with new tasks that they cannot do the basic ones for which our school exists.

We utilize the principle of multiple fronts, meaning that different people contribute in different areas of the exercise at the same time and that there won't always be time to bring all of the partners back together again to hear what everyone else did. We also use the principle of broken fronts, meaning that some suggestions are incompatible for now and will have to be brought back into line later. They will still be useful to us in understanding different points of view which must be addressed within our community. The school administration is charged with the responsibility of fitting the pieces together.

The pillars of invitational education must be paramount in our work together as they characterize much of what is best in this particular school community:

- trust in each other's best efforts and abilities
- respect each other's values and persons
- be optimistic that we will achieve a plan much better than any one of us could have devised alone
- work together intentionally towards a common goal of giving our students more than they have today.

Developing a School Jurisdiction's Funding Distribution Model

Tom Olson, Secretary Treasurer,
Parkland School Division No. 70 and Vice-President,
Association of School Business Officials of Alberta

A basic foundation for site-based decision making to be successful is an equitable distribution of the jurisdiction=s resources. There is no predetermined amount or category that is universally acceptable. Each school system has different needs; however, there are some principles that should be applied universally.

The term Aequity@ is fundamental in the development of a funding distribution model for a school jurisdiction. One way to create equity between schools is to establish categories as a way of identifying differences between schools. If all schools had exactly the same student population base with exactly the same special needs, there would be no need to have categories for special needs, small schools and different grade levels. A basic amount per student would be equitable because no school would be at an advantage or disadvantage over the other. In the real world, no two schools have the same student population base. Therefore, a funding distribution model is designed to address the disproportionate makeup of student populations among schools to create equity.

Equity in site-based decision making is a belief among all partners within the jurisdiction that each school is treated fairly in relationship to all other schools. That does not mean that each school is receiving enough resources to do all the things it would like to do, but rather that each school has an equitable share in the limited resources available. It is important that everyone throughout the school community recognize that equity is the key principle in the funding distribution model. Category funding does not and should not be intended to provide specific funding to a program. It is establishing equity between schools so that no one school is at a disadvantage or advantage over any other school. How schools approach each programming challenge they face should be a site decision. Schools may approach the same challenge differently.

An effective funding model should be based on a weighting factor scenario. There are several advantages to using a weighting factor model. The following is one example of how a weighting factor model would look:

Basic Weighting Factor 1 = $3,065 (This amount becomes the amount of available resources and varies from year to year.)

School board policy and procedures for school-based decision making shall:

Ensure through established criteria for funding an equitable allocation of funds which respects the differences in school populations.

Provincial School-Based Decision Making Policy, January 9, 1996

The following categories should be basic (standard) in all funding distribution models:

Category	Factor	Rate per Student
ECS	.45	1,379
Elementary	1.00	3,065
Junior High	1.00	3,065
Senior High	1.03	3,157
Home Schooling	.323	990

It is important when developing the funding model to place the most emphasis on the basic allocation per student (regardless of category) as the primary source in determining equitable distribution. You may find that the more categories that are created, the more ineffective the funding model becomes. Categories are established to recognize differences between schools, not to try to match funding to programs.

For example, if you have determined the percentage of students with learning disabilities (LD) in each school compared to the school=s enrollment is between two per cent and five per cent, then you could say the category funding allocation is only recognizing the variances over the two per cent. The first two per cent is included in the basic funding to every school. Remember, a funding model should not match allocations to program but recognize variances between schools to maintain equity. In this case, there is no variance between schools for the first two per cent of LD incidence.

Using a weighting factor allows the establishment of relationships between categories. Changes to all category amounts from year to year are based on resources available. This provides the opportunity to adjust funding allocations across the entire funding distribution model based on the total amount of resources available. It also provides for the ability to change an individual factor to affect a rate for an individual category during the annual review process.

In addition to the five basic funding categories, there can be a number of additional categories. Funding for these categories is in addition to the basic. Following is an example of additional categories and factors for those categories.

Weighting Factor for Students

Several jurisdictions (Wolf Creek, St. Albert Catholic, Prairie Rose and Northern Lights) consider students in elementary, junior high and senior high to be equal for funding allocation. Most jurisdictions use a weighted formula with the elementary student (English, regular) being equivalent to 1.0, with various increasing amounts for other categories of students. For example:

Holy Spirit Catholic Schools

	Rate per Student
Elementary	1.00
Junior High	1.03
Senior High	1.05

Edmonton Public Schools

Elementary/ Junior High	1.00
Senior High	1.03

Northern Gateway Schools

ECS	0.5
Elementary	1.0
Junior High	1.3
Senior High	1.5

Category	Factor	Rate per Student
Mild & Moderate ECS		1.360
Program Unit Funds (PUFs)		11.852
English Second Language	.21	644
Vocational/CTS	.26	797
Outreach	.75	2.299
IOP	.75	2.299
Learning Disability	1.25	3.831
Mild Mental Disability	1.25	3.831
Hearing Impaired	1.50	4.598
Moderate Physical Disability	1.50	4.598
Moderate Multiple Disability	1.50	4.598
Moderate Mental Disability	2.00	6.130
Moderate Behaviour/Emotional	2.00	6.130
Severe Behaviour/Emotional	5.40	16.551
Deafness	5.40	16.551
Blindness	5.40	16.551
Autism	5.40	16.551
Dependent Mental Disabilities	5.40	16.551
Multiple Disabilities	5.40	16.551
Severe Physical Disabilities	5.40	16.551

Therefore, a school having a student in the moderate behaviour/emotional disability category would receive the basic funding of $3.065 plus $6.130 in revenue allocation.

There are other components contained in a funding model that should also be considered in order to maintain equity. Provisions for a small school allocation is one example of other considerations.

Small School < 300	Rate Per Student
Elementary	300
Junior High	140
Senior High	200

The small school formula is different in the sense that it determines the difference between a base amount and actual enrollment. It is the difference that is used to calculate the allocation amount. For example, if a school with Grades 1–6 has an enrollment of 200 students and the small school allocation is based on 300 students or less, then the following formula determines the allocation for the school:

- 300 (basic) — 200 (actual enrollment) = 100 (students below basic)
- 100 (students below basic) x $300 (rate per student) = $30,000 (small school allocation)

The benchmark for support of small school allocations can and will vary from school jurisdiction to school jurisdiction. Different basic amounts can be used for elementary, junior high and senior high schools. Small school allocations are intended to maintain equity between schools of different sizes; however, using this type of formula still makes schools of extremely low enrollments not financially viable. The funding distribution model becomes defensible because it is equitable to all schools.

Dual track (language) programs are another consideration. Dual track program allocations recognize the difference between a school operating dual track and those that are not.

Now that we have determined equity as a part of the way in which schools operating under site-based decision making receive their revenue, we need to discuss some other basic principles on the expenditure side to maintain that equity. One principle relates to staff salaries. In most school systems, certificated staff and noncertificated staff are paid at different rates. If equity is to be maintained between schools, average salaries per each category or classification of staff have to be considered on the expense side.

Buffalo Trail Regional Division

School population under 250 students ⊂ allowance of $30,000.

School population 250–400 students ⊂ allowance of $20,000.

Northern Lights School Division

Small school grant to five schools ⊂ amount varies.

Holy Spirit Catholic Separate Regional Division

$150 for every student below the number of the largest school.

Lethbridge School District

A lump sum payment to small schools ⊂ $30,000 to two schools.

For example, if each school determines its own staffing component, then the only variable between schools should be the decision of how many of what category or classification of staff they decide to have. If actual salaries are charged to each school, then a school which has an older staff is at a great resource disadvantage over a school with a considerably younger staff. The exception to using average salaries is with allowances. Allowances have a direct relationship to the size of the school; therefore, allowances can be budgeted at actual and still maintain equity. The only advantage schools should have over other schools in staffing, lies with the decision of how programs and services are delivered and the number of staff required to achieve that. This drives innovation as schools look for efficiencies in delivering programs and services. Remember, the basic principle in developing a funding model is equity.

In conjunction with equity, comes building a self-managing system which has built-in incentives. An example of this important principle in site-based decision making is allowing whatever the surplus position at the end of the year to be carried forward to the next year. Of course, with the right of retention of surplus funds comes the same responsibility for deficits.

We have described some basic principles that make site-based decision making successful. We also need to discuss how we deal with budgeting at each site using average salary costs, and incorporating those budget figures into the jurisdiction accounting system (GL). This is where we put theory into practice and make it work.

First, we want to maintain equity by using the average salaries in determining budget expenditures. Second, we want the jurisdiction's GL system to generate reports to principals on a monthly basis. The measurement of how well a school is doing is made by comparing the budget figure to the year-to-date expenditures. This is not possible if the budget figure is based on an average salary and the year-to-date actual is showing actual expenditures. One figure or the other has to be converted to create the proper relationship between them. If the year-to-date actual salary expenditure is converted to a year-to-date average salary each time a report is generated, we have comparability; however, there is a tremendous amount of work involved in converting this information every time a report is generated.

Another way is to convert the budgeted average figure to a budgeted actual figure and still maintain the principle of equity. One way to accomplish this is to budget based on averages; then on September 30th, convert the average budget figures to actual budget salary figures. Done at this stage, this process is easy and provides a system for change in staffing throughout the year without requiring any adjustments. The actual salary for each staff member that the budget is based on determines what the actual budget for salaries at that school will be (September 30). This revised budget figure is compared to the average budget figure. If the school's overall actual salaries are below the budgeted average salaries, then resources equal to that amount are subtracted from the revenue side and from the expense side to reflect that difference. The opposite applies to schools with higher actual salaries than the average salaries. The conversion for all schools combined should net to zero because resources are added to or subtracted from the revenue side and the expenditure side.

The following example shows how this is done.

School A

Budget Categories	Before Conversion	After Conversion
Total Revenue Allocation Conversion to Actual	1,000,000	1,000,000 (100,000)
Total Revenue	**1,000,000**	**900,000**
Expense Total Personnel (Average) Conversion to Actual	 800,000	 800,000 (100,000)
Total Personnel	**800,000**	**700,000**
Total Contracted Services	75,000	75,000
Total Supplies	100,000	100,000
Total Transfers	25,000	25,000
Total Expenditures	**1,100,000**	**900,000**
Surplus/Deficit	0	0

For the system, the total for all schools on the conversion to actual equals zero or close to it. Some schools will be additions and some schools will be subtractions.

School B shows the opposite effect of the conversion.

School B

Budget Categories	Before Conversion	After Conversion
Total Revenue Allocation Conversion to Actual	1,000,000	1,000,000 100,000
Total Revenue	**1,000,000**	**1,100,000**
Expense Total Personnel (Average) Conversion to Actual	800,000	800,000 (100,000)
Total Personnel	**800,000**	**900,000**
Total Contracted Services	75,000	75,000
Total Supplies	100,000	100,000
Total Transfers	25,000	25,000
Total Expenditures	**1,100,000**	**1,100,000**
Surplus/Deficit	0	0

In School A, the conversion required reduces both revenue and expenditure by $100,000. You will note this process does not have any effect on the school=s financial ability. They still have the same amount of resources to distribute after they have determined their starting requirements. Because the conversion is only based on what the school site has determined for staffing using average salaries, the principle of equity is maintained. In School B, there is $100,000 required to be added to both the revenue and expenditure side to support costs at this school that are higher than the average. Both schools A and B have the same number of staff, but in School A the staff is younger and in School B the staff is much older. Using this budget process now gives the jurisdiction the ability to enter the adjusted budget information into the GL system (September 30). The schools now have comparability of budget figures that represent exactly what they want to achieve.

So what do we do after September 30? After September 30, no further budget adjustments occur. If additional staff are required by a school after September 30, they are just expensed to that school at whatever actual costs are for that staff. The additional staff mean an over-expenditure to budget, and principals either increase revenue to offset this or decide to reduce some other expenditure to accommodate the additional staff. The same thing occurs when a staff member leaves during the year. The budget remains unchanged but the school does not expend as much as planned. The school generates a surplus for their use elsewhere or in a future year.

Surplus or Deficit

- Range allowed in the various school jurisdiction manuals is from 0–10 per cent; most jurisdictions are in the 3–5 per cent range
- Surplus may be carried over but most budget manuals suggest that this be modest

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Samples of Principles of School-Based Budgeting: Red Deer RCSS District No. 17

Lloyd Baumgarten, Superintendent

Budget Development Principles

The board is committed to the enhancement of the Catholic identity and faith dimensions of all aspects of the district=s operation consistent with the mission, beliefs and values.

In achieving the mission of quality education, the provision of an effective teaching/learning environment for students will be a first priority for budget allocation.

The board is committed to a consultative process in the development of the budget.

The board will establish, communicate and monitor district goals, objectives and priorities designed to achieve the district mission and vision.

In consultation with district administration, responsibility and accountability for school programs, activities and services will rest with the school administration.

School administration will develop priorities and plans for programs, activities and services in consultation with staff, parents, students where appropriate and the Catholic community.

The board, through the budget process, wishes to encourage innovation in Catholic leadership, organization, learning, teaching, administrative and resource distribution practices.

The budget will address plans and needs for the three-year period from September 1996 through August 1999.

The objective of the board is to achieve a balanced budget for each of the three years of the plan.

Lethbridge School District No. 51

Gary Kiernan, Superintendent

Budgeting Principles and Parameters

Allocation of funds shall be in accordance with the *School Act*, and the policies and regulations of the Minister.

Instructional block funds shall be allocated in such a way as to best meet the needs of all enrolled students.

The principal shall be responsible for the apportioning of funds allocated to the school.

Planned additions to or deletions from the instructional program and services of a school shall be identified in the annual plan and require the prior approval of the superintendent of schools.

Schools may pool funds to support a shared program/service which benefits students, but not necessarily all students.

Support block funds shall be allocated in such a way as to best meet the operational needs of the district.

Allocation of funds should reflect school district policies, priorities and obligations.

All contractual obligations shall be honored.

Preparation of the budget should be a collaborative activity with opportunity for input provided to major stakeholder groups.

School budgets are subject to review by the superintendent of schools.

Allocation of operations and maintenance funds shall be determined in consultation with the maintenance supervisor.

Annual budgets should reflect both short- and long-term needs and priorities.

Budgets will be developed within the context of three-year education plans.

It is recommended that the school budget be reviewed with the school council, on at least one occasion, prior to being finalized.

School budgets shall be submitted in the prescribed format on or before May 15 of each year and reviewed with executive council as part of the annual planning process.

Samples of School/Central Budget Responsibilities: Red Deer School District No. 104

Len Luders, Superintendent

Decentralized Expenditure Areas

Responsibility for resource allocation in the following areas is assigned to the school principal, in consultation with staff and the school council where appropriate.

- Flexibility to reallocate staff salaries and benefits based on average salaries and benefits (may be limited by human resources)
- Administrative and team leader allowances
- Substitute support staff (up to 4 per cent of individual support staff time)
- Staff selection (shared responsibility)
- Overtime costs
- Secondary markers
- Lunchroom supervision (non-bused students only)
- Special needs staffing and programs for students having mild disabilities and gifted students
- Staff development including registration, travel, subsistence, substitute costs (all staff)
- Cafeteria operation
- Discretionary fund
- Clause 14
- Extracurricular and curricular field trips (including transportation)
- New equipment
- Furniture and equipment replacements (items less than $3,000)
- Photocopiers (lease or purchase)
- Computer equipment and software
- Equipment rentals; leases, maintenance agreements
- Equipment repairs; equipment referred to external repair services
- Telephone, telephone lines, long distance charges, fax charges, cable costs including maintenance agreements for telephones
- Advertising and public relations
- Awards
- Bank charges
- Building rentals
- Memberships and association fees
- Postage
- Printing and binding (per copy costs and copier purchase or lease)
- Instructional supplies and materials, except caretaker supplies
- Testing materials (except district-mandated testing)
- Learning resources (including PPR rights)
- Textbooks
- Office supplies
- School council costs

Centralized Expenditure Areas

Responsibility for resource allocation in the following areas is assumed by the board of trustees.

Board governance

System administration

Staff recruitment, selection (shared responsibility) and deployment

Staff development for TA's assigned for specific students

Substitute teachers

Maternity benefits

Long-term disability

Coordinators of instruction and support services including supplies

Special education support services for students having moderate and severe disabilities

Assessments for secondary students

Home education

Extension programs (will be contracted to schools)

Program and school evaluations\monitoring

Information support services

District storeroom management and delivery services

Tech prep

Family-school wellness and Native liaison workers (contract services)

Institutional programs

Speech\language\hearing services

Employee assistance program (EAP)

Lunchroom supervision for bused students

Facilities

- Facility operation and maintenance
- Custodial supplies and equipment
- Snow removal, sidewalks and parking lots
- Grass mowing
- Utilities
- Telephone system replacement
- Repairs and maintenance
- Capital construction including major renovations

Student transportation — to and from school only

Financial and accounting services

Payroll services

Instructional technology

- Repair of classroom computers by district staff only

Testing materials (district mandated tests)

Media resources centre

Teacher centre

Program unit grant (PUG) programs

Contingency fund

Advertising

Equipment and furniture (district technology initiatives only and replacement items over $3,000)

Software licenses (district-mandated software)

Sample of Budget Responsibilities: Prairie Rose Regional Division No. 8

Keith Jones, Superintendent

Basic Instruction Grant Allocation 1997–98

Central instructional budget on per student basis:

- sub costs — short term
- sub costs — extended
- LOA, sabbaticals, contingency
- Division inservice
- Special education coordinator
- Technology advisor
- Technology fund and major capital purchases
- Private ECS
- Special education tuition

School-Based Items

To be funded through school allocations:

- Salaries — teachers — full- and part-time (at average cost)
- Admin allowances — principal, vice principal and acting (at actual)
- Salaries — secretary, library tech, teacher assistants* (at average)
- Benefits (per centage of salaries)
- Services purchased (phones, copying, field trips)
- Supplies (includes textbooks, library, equipment)

Dues & Fees:

- Professional development (including sub costs)
  *excludes teacher assistants for severely disabled students.

Sample of Budget Responsibilities: Fort McMurray RCSS District No. 32

Dan McIsaac, Superintendent

School-Based Management Manual

Expenditures Charged to School

A more detailed explanation of what is to be included in each expenditure code is included under the "Object Classification Narration" section.

Teacher salaries	Temporary teacher salaries
Support staff salaries	Temporary support staff salaries
Community use attendance	Overtime
Vacation entitlement	Employee benefits
Professional services	
– student testing, piano tuning	
Student/staff/community relations	
Postage	Telephone
Travel & subsistence	
– School bursaries	
– Professional development	
– Convention allowances	
Itinerant travel	Travel & subsistence, volunteers & chaperones
Curricular field trips	Extracurricular field trips
Equipment repair	Equipment rentals
Dues and fees	Printing and binding
Advertising	Educational supplies
Administrative supplies	Custodial supplies
Textbooks	Educational media
Computer software	Educational furniture and equipment

Sample of Budget Responsibilities: Pembina Hills Regional Division No. 7

Sigfried Schmold, Superintendent

Co-op Responsibility

- Contingency funding — severe disabilities, special education mild/moderate, general contingency
- District-wide services purchased — FCSS, MECC, copyrights
- Board costs
- Division office costs
- Construction infrastructure — major, minor
- Maintenance of buildings — central, but flex money for minor projects/maintenance contingency
- Utilities — water, sewer, gas, power, security system, communication infrastructure
- Communication infrastructure — phones, fax, E-mail, Internet
- Transportation — to and from school, between schools for program reasons
- Substitutes, long-term and district-directed — maternity leaves, absences greater than three consecutive days
- Division-wide professional development — fees, travel and subsistence
- Recruitment of staff and school-based administration
- Coordination within the system — programs, curriculum, evaluation, resources, paper, photocopying, where feasible costs charged back to school budgets
- Evaluation — system schools
- Approval of instructional resource fees
- Media services — CAMS, Yellowhead, IMC
- Home schooling
- Out-of-district student placements
- Sabbaticals/secondments/early retirements
- Special education services — contracted services; e.g., ECSS, Edmonton public, instructional support specialist, out-of-district placements
- Computer technicians — related travel and subsistence, repair and maintenance
- System grants to organizations and individuals — science fair, music festival, transportation to provincials

School Responsibility

- Transportation — extracurricular, field trips, athletics, co-curricular
- Substitutes, short-term — certified and non-certified, up to three consecutive working days
- Staff recruitment in association with the human resources department
- Staff allocation
- Programming costs — instructional (textbooks) resources and materials excluding library materials
- Supplies
- Special education programming
- Facility rentals
- Instructional equipment lease and repairs
- Furnishings and equipment
- Staff professional development and related costs
- Public relations advertising — related costs

Workshop Idea #13: Developing Budget Principles and Processes

Purpose: to develop principles to guide budget decision making

to use the budget principles to determine allocation to schools

to outline steps and responsibilities in the budget process.

Materials: jurisdiction documents (mission, vision, goals, three-year plan), models from other jurisdictions (optional), workshop worksheets (developed by facilitator), chart paper, pens, budget information for the jurisdiction

Time: 2–3 hours

Revisit Mission and Goals

Presentation and review of vision and mission. Discussion of what is important in education in the jurisdiction.

Budget Principles

In small groups (with a mix of stakeholder groups, principals, teachers, parents, trustees and central office staff), brainstorm a set of statements of principles. Compare the lists and develop a common, agreed-upon list which will be used to guide the rest of the process.

Options — Use the affinity charting process (described in Chapter 3, page 40) instead of brainstorming.

Samples from several jurisdictions are included on pages 19–26 of this chapter that may be used as a guide or simply as information.

Determining Off-the-Top Allocations

To answer the question "Which services from the instructional block are best met centrally?" participants either brainstorm the list or work from a list created by another jurisdiction. Samples are included in this chapter pages 9–10.

This exercise determines the total funds to be allocated to schools from the instructional block.

Determining the Allocation Formula

Present budget data for jurisdiction. Discuss in large group around key issues:

- weighting of students
- small schools, small programs
- staffing formula
- unique factors.

Material is available in the focus articles at the beginning of this chapter.

After general discussion, work in small groups and then in the larger group to reach consensus about the general questions: e.g., Do we have a different weighting factor for elementary, junior high and senior high students? What do we do about small schools? Are sparcity and distance factors? What other factors should we consider?

Next Steps

A small task force is charged with generating specific formulas to bring back for ratification, outlining the steps and timeline for the process, and including forms and templates.

The process requires annual review and analysis. Changes may be needed from year to year.

Chapter 8

Assessing Progress

School-Based Decision Making Resource Guide:
Focus on Teaching and Learning

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CHAPTER 8 — Assessing Progress

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Assessing Progress

Focus Article

Tested in Alberta

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Chapter Eight

Introduction

This chapter begins by examining the provincial and school board planning, budgeting, assessing, reporting and improvement cycle which is designed to promote a continuing process for improvement. The focus article by Bob O'Reilly asks some general evaluation questions that may apply to SBDM. The important question of evaluation has not been answered completely in the literature or by school jurisdictions. One of the reasons for this shortcoming rests with the complexity of the initiative. More work needs to be done in this area. Certainly, student achievement is not an adequate measure.

In the SBDM practice article from University Elementary School in Chapter Six page 32, Sylvia Mutch outlines some of the ways to measure progress for each of the strategies they now use to achieve their vision.

Other evaluation or assessment approaches from Edmonton Public, Grasslands and Foothills are included in this chapter.

Sample workshops are provided to assist in thinking about evaluation and data gathering.

Reference: *The Guide for Developing School Boards Three-Year Education Plans and Annual Education Results Reports*
— Alberta Education

Accountability Framework

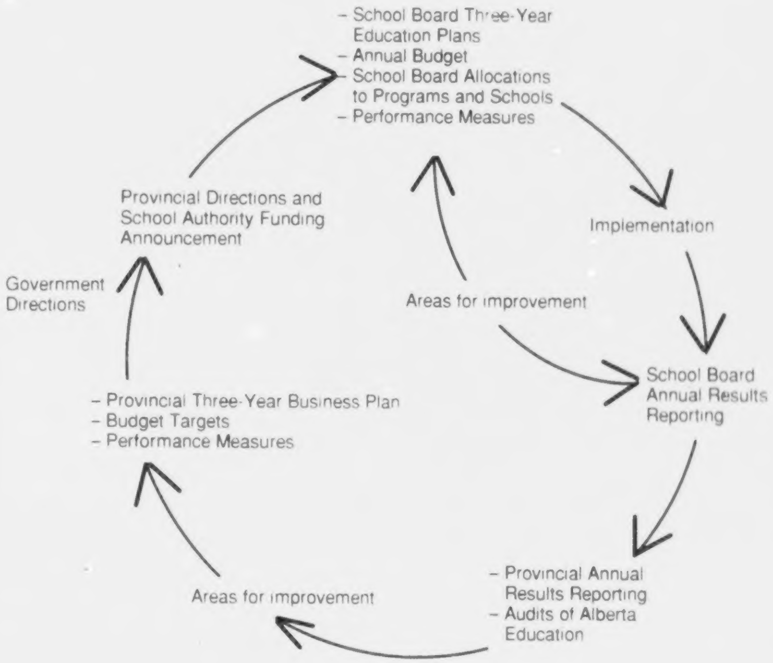
The present education climate is defined by two converging factors: first, there is increased interest and involvement by more sections of society — parents, community, business and government; second, there is a growing demand for accountability. How well are students doing in general and how well are our students doing in relation to other students in other parts of Canada and the world?

Therefore, an accountability framework for school systems and for schools includes:

- processes for communicating with the various publics
- what students are learning
- how well students are learning and what progress they are making
- how a continuous cycle of improvement is in operation.

Guide for Developing School Board Three-Year Education Plans and Annual Education Results Reports

Provincial and School Board Planning, Budgeting, Assessing, Reporting and Improvement Cycle


- School Board Three-Year Education Plans
- Annual Budget
- School Board Allocations to Programs and Schools
- Performance Measures
Implementation
School Board Annual Results Reporting
- Provincial Annual Results Reporting
- Audits of Alberta Education
Areas for improvement
- Provincial Three-Year Business Plan
- Budget Targets
- Performance Measures
Government Directions
Provincial Directions and School Authority Funding Announcement
Areas for improvement

The diagram on the previous page shows the linkages among planning, budgeting, assessing, reporting and improvement in the accountability cycle at the provincial and school board levels.

It is important to make the linkages. For example, if a jurisdiction determines (based on a variety of factors — achievement tests, teacher diagnosis, other diagnostic tests and a parental input survey) that improved student literacy (ECS–Grade 3) is a goal then several actions should follow:

- develop a two-year plan to focus on student literacy
- allocate more funds to elementary schools in the budget formula to allow for smaller classes
- provide inservice programs for teachers
- allow more time in the school timetable
- test and survey at the end of the first and second years.

Or, if a jurisdiction determines that achievement in mathematics is a priority because achievement test scores have been declining over time, this becomes a budget and planning priority. More funds are allocated for math resources, math classes are reduced in size, inservice priority is given to math teachers and placement of students is evaluated.

However, it is important to keep in mind that we must look more deeply than achievement test results.

The Provincial Level

Once the accountability framework is established, the next step is the development of instruments by which progress can be measured. The measures chosen may be provincial testing programs, satisfaction surveys, three-year education plans, reports on the attainment of projected achievements and financial audits. These measures are paralleled at the school board level. The most recent change in the provincial scene has to do with the allowance for school boards to set their own strategies for achieving the goals and results.

To add to this framework at the provincial level, the work of Paul LeMahieu, University of Delaware, holds promise. In his address to the Alberta Assessment Consortium 1997 fall conference, he portrayed a system of communication (accountability) in which the Minister of Education gathers representatives from stakeholder groups across the province for an annual address. These representatives are present to hear the Minister's report on the achievements of the past year and his or her plans for the coming year (or, in Alberta, the next version of the three-year business plan). Provided with advance copies of the same data used by the Minister to plan for the future, the groups then present their own views of what should be contained in the three-year education plan. The information is integrated into the revised plan to the extent it makes sense to do so in a

Education Week on the Web

- **Student Achievement** is measured using standardized tests and future measurement indicators including academic participation, number of students staying in school and the likelihood of student movement to college.
- **Standards and Assessment** ascertains the existence of content standards and high expectations for student achievement.
- **Quality of Teaching** looks at standards for teacher certification and level of attainment of those standards by beginning teachers; it also examines the consistency of training with the assignments teachers are given.
- **School Climate** measures class sizes below 25 at the elementary level and per cent of secondary English teachers with fewer than 80 students. The provision of school-based decision making, provision of waivers of regulations in certain circumstances and open door policies are also indicators.
- **Adequacy of Resources** — Provincial commitment to education is assessed based on educational expenditures (total amount of expenditure, proportion of expenditure on instruction and technology, and state of building adequacy are key indicators).

School effectiveness might be evidenced in the following:

- *developing a strategic plan which includes a shared vision of excellence in the desired educational program*
- *demonstrating leadership and initiative in continuous program improvement efforts to attain the vision*
- *creating an effective work environment*
- *determining organizational arrangements to maximize human and financial resources*
- *solving problems at the school level*
- *evaluating program effectiveness in terms of the vision and student success*
- *functioning in compliance within the appropriate legal and policy requirements and guidelines.*

— Larry Reynolds, *A Practical Guide to Site-Based Management* (1993)

collaborative process over the next few days. It is presumed that the participants in the dialogue all bear some responsibility for its eventual implementation. Using accountability in this context, LeMahieu maintains that the attainment of high performance in education is likely as it pulls partners together in more meaningful and supportive ways to promote continuous improvement.

The Jurisdiction Level

School boards are challenged to align provincial directions and expectations with local needs and expectations.

The suggestions made by LeMahieu can be applied to the jurisdiction level as well as to the provincial level. Indeed, it is probably easier to apply them here. An invitation to a broadly based set of representatives to listen to past results achieved in the jurisdiction, to identify current issues and trends, and to consider provincial expectations for the future has merit. Validation of proposals seems an important step to take should a jurisdiction want to broaden support for its initiatives. This validation also serves the purpose of discovering methods different groups might employ to come together and support the proposed initiatives.

Timelines are often a source of frustration for jurisdictions who are caught between deadlines and the need to consult broadly using information which becomes available late in the process. The issue of timeliness of information sharing is an important one for jurisdictions to negotiate with the province.

The School Level

Schools, too, need to communicate with their stakeholders about the results which are achieved in a year and the directions for the future. A variety of material should be reported, including:

- school goals — the results of strategies in the plan
- school programs — what they were? how they were done?
- student achievement in many forms
- student needs
- satisfaction.

Accountability at the school level demands consistent provision of context when discussing where the school has been and where it wishes to proceed. Schools, together with their jurisdictional personnel, might take time to invite together constituent members of stakeholder groups who do not have children in the school to explain to these people the contexts which are important to understanding success in schools. The educational function has moved far beyond the classroom and well into the community. There are many groups who are responding with great enthusiasm to the invitations extended to them. Others are alienated as the system takes them into realms of involvement which are far different from those desired or originally imagined.

While jurisdictions and the province have definite formats and measures which are used to indicate their achievements, schools must devise their own, collectively or independently, which are consistent with those of the other two levels. They should certainly provide the context for accomplishments in ways that are meaningful and which allow comparison over time.

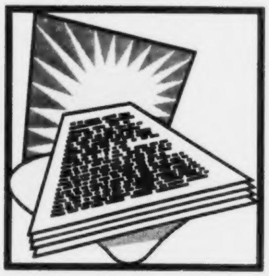
A note of caution — Ensure that your data collection is well thought out and that the data is reliable and valid. If the jurisdiction or school is making decisions about progress based on this data, it must be an accurate picture.

References:

The Guide for Developing School Board Three-Year Education Plans and Annual Reports

The Individual Level

Just as schools must cooperate to accomplish the work of the jurisdiction, so, too, must staff members (professional and support), parents and students work together to accomplish the activities planned within school communities. This perspective complements the framework described in that individual members of a school community can and should take responsibility for some aspects of the school plans and for accomplishing the aims of schools to support young people in their growth. The continuous improvement cycle applies to each person. Staff and students have formalized vehicles for continuous learning and improvement. Students have formalized vehicles for sharing their learning. Parents have had little opportunity for either. Schools will accomplish more with a commitment to the members of the school community. *Partners in Learning*, a new Alberta Teachers' Association initiative, has much to offer within this context of building partnership.



Measuring Progress

Bob O'Reilly, Associate Dean, University of Calgary

In all assessment endeavors, we usually ask ourselves variations of three questions:

- Where am I going?
- How will I get there?
- How will I know when I have arrived?

These three questions are pertinent for evaluating progress within the SBDM project.

The first question, "Where am I going?" or "What do I want? or "What is my goal?" can be asking questions that range from the specific to the more general. If you cannot answer this question, then obviously it doesn't matter what you do as any event is just as likely as any other to result in the unknown objective. In SBDM there are objectives that come to the school in terms of provincial educational goals. Our culture has also given us some goals; e.g., desirable behaviours of students, even if these are less clear. Tradition gives us many goals for schools as well.

A school community must look at its goals. A clear vision statement and school goal statement helps (See Chapter Three). In exploring what the goals of the school should be, various subgroups within the community should explore various images of what appropriate behaviour and outcomes should be. These images could be of in-class processes (noisy or quiet), relationships between staff and parents (formal or collegial) and of assessment processes (formal written examinations or monitoring of problem-solving processes). People can deal with images better than with goal statements. A collection of images gives a rich and "thick" impression of what life in a good school should be like. They are also readily available tests for goal statements and implementation ideas. These images should be juxtaposed with other images and with formal goals to identify incongruities as well as complementarities. If a well-supported image is at odds with a goal or other images, then more work needs to be done. Goal statements for an organization as complex as a school may include some conflicting statements and will also be a compromise among competing views. Assessment procedures in a school must reflect the complexity of the school's goals and programs. There is a need for "requisite variety," to borrow a phrase from the domain of the communication theory.

The second question is "How am I going to get there?"or "How will I achieve this goal?" Images help clarify the processes that might lead to goal attainment. It is here that professional educators must use all the resources at their command to design good programs and good schools, for the task is daunting. Every student comes to school with individual goals which he or she chooses to pursue from time to time. Student motivation to pursue goals depends greatly on their life-situations and their views of reality. Thus, designing schools and school programs is a complex affair calling for superior educational skills and respectful sensitivity to the conditions of children within the community. Being clear about the processes within a school and the processes of learning is critical to being able to measure progress towards goals.

A major process goal is the development of all people who work in the school. What opportunities are there for teachers, administrators and volunteers to develop those skills which are required by the social program? Are adults in the school developing those social, educational, technical and organizational skills required for the school in the months and years to come?

A variety of process evaluation measures are necessary within a school to inform all participants (parents, staff and students) if progress is being made. Such process measures include measures of morale, commitment, expenditure of time on studies and other school activities, attendance, vandalism, as well as interim test results. Interim reports and reports of process variables tell the school if it is on track and if new strategies are called for.

The third question is a difficult one for schools: "How will I know when I have arrived?" At the end of their studies, some students will have made progress in becoming good citizens and contributing adult members of the community, some will be prepared for advanced studies, others will begin apprenticeships in various job and training activities which will lead to careers and others will win sports trophies and music competitions. Many will already have learned to cope with life's vicissitudes of disease, family disintegration and opportunities lost. Which of these will the school honour? Which of these will the school celebrate? Which of the above accomplishments indicate school success?

A fourth question — "How do I share this?" — suggest networks and networking.

In the above processes, there is no beginning and no end. Planning, monitoring progress and assessment are iteractive cycles. Observations, opinions and decisions made at one level feed into the next process of the cycle and are influenced in turn by how these observations, opinions and decisions are received.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Putting the "Site" Into Site-Based Leadership, Edmonton School District No. 7

Shirley Stiles, Assistant to the Superintendent

Who to Involve

Encourage involvement and participation by:

- parents
- students (former and present)
- school councils
- business partners
- community representatives
- staff
- volunteers
- key communicators
- business community
- seniors.

Information and Ideas to Share About

Budget:

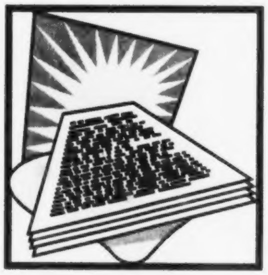
- details on where the money is being spent
- specific dollars and cents budget information
- draft proposal of budget
- existing budget
- source of money and how the resources are allocated
- which items are in accordance with law and Edmonton Public Schools' policies and regulations

Schools:

- school priorities and mission
- costs for staff, supplies and services
- results achieved and not achieved in the previous school year
- the impact of budget planning discussions on school, programs, etc.
- the roles and responsibilities of volunteers in budget planning
- ways parents and the community can be involved in developing long-range plans

District and Community:

- Edmonton Public Schools' priorities and mission
- information on events that relate to education
- central services' roles and responsibilities
- how curriculum is developed and funded



Demonstrate to all stakeholders that their input makes a difference.

- Tailor the information you share to meet the needs of your audience.
- Provide information in small amounts — don't overload.
- Group similar kinds of information together for the best impact.
- Involve parents and the community in developing long-range plans.

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Ways to Involve and Inform

Print and Media:

- newsletters
  - staff
  - parents
  - community
  - business (send information to businesses in your community or ask to be included in existing business newsletters)
- media
  - advertising in community or city newspapers
  - public service announcements (PSAs) in newspaper, radio, television
  - include information on budget with report cards

Meetings and Discussions:

- roundtable discussions
  - invite people by invitation, newsletter, phoning and advertising
  - provide free babysitting
- informal monthly coffee meetings
- budget meetings with students
- parent advisory council meetings
- brown bag sessions with staff and parents
- organize committees to deal with individual issues
- phone "fan out" of information

Surveys and Questionnaires:

- surveys
  - at school events: e.g., concerts, open houses
  - parent-teacher conferences
  - community evenings
  - students
- phone surveys by staff and parents

Presentations:

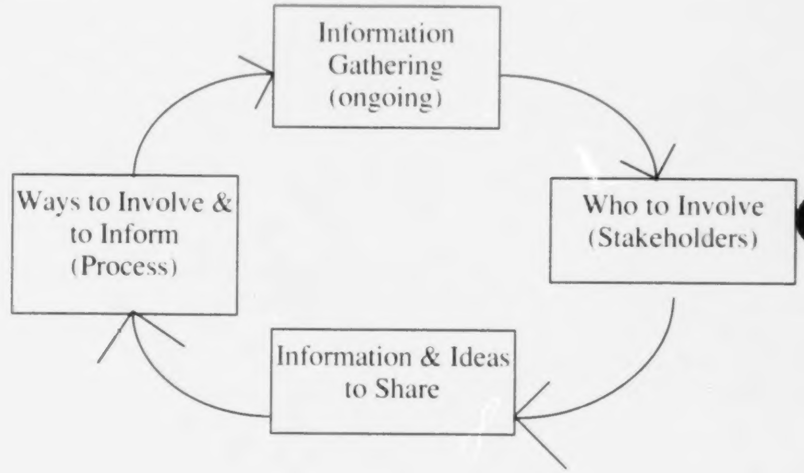
- have central services' departments and schools make presentations to the community
- information booths run by staff, parents and community members at malls and school events.

Communication Ideas:

- Give parents time to review information before you ask for feedback.
- Demonstrate to parents that their input makes a difference.
- Tailor information to your audience, avoid jargon and ask well-defined questions.
- Be flexible.
- Challenge your groups to look beyond specific school issues to address educational issues.
- Encourage new and creative solutions.
- Encourage school councils to become more active in their community as school advocates.
- Encourage an open-door policy.

Information Gathering

- Survey parents.
- Hold an information meeting for parents and community members.
- Invite the business community to share their perspectives.
- Talk to people in informal settings.
- Feedback from key communicators.
- Input from parent advisory councils.
- Ask for input from your labour community.
- Get commitment from various groups to support the achievement of priorities.
- Develop central services' department advisory boards consisting of parents and community members.


Information Gathering (ongoing)
Who to Involve (Stakeholders)
Information & Ideas to Share
Ways to Involve & to Inform (Process)

- Gather information throughout the year, not just at budget time.
- Involve parents, staff and members of the community in the budget process early, and on an ongoing basis.
- Be aware of the philosophy and concerns of your parents and community.

Ten Commandments for Successful Site-Based Management

1. Thou Shalt Look Sharp and Feel Sharp.
2. Thou Shalt Learn the Language of Effective Teaching and Learning.
3. Thou Shalt Be Visible.
4. Thou Shalt Train Teachers in the Art of Decision Making and Consensus Building.
5. Thou Shalt Be a Dream Keeper.
6. Thou Shalt Tell the Truth.
7. Thou Shalt Make Heroes and Heroines of Others.
8. Thou Shalt Have High Expectations.
9. Thou Shalt Evaluate Performance.
10. Thou Shalt Keep a Sense of Humour.

Relationships Between Goal Setting, Planning, Budgeting and Evaluation

Deciding What to Do (and becoming more specific)		Deciding How to Do It		Doing It	Is it Working? Did it Work?	
PURPOSES	**OBJECTIVES**	**PLAN**	**BUDGET**	**IMPLEMENTATION**	**MONITORING**	**EVALUATION**
Identifies critical areas within which goals, standards and objectives should be set. • Framework for goal, standard and objective setting • All areas should be monitored • If results acceptable in all areas, then the organization is performing satisfactorily	Statements of specific results to be achieved, in measurable terms, over a specified period of time. • Start process by brainstorming planning alternatives • Goals are usually achieved by series of incremental objectives • End objective is standard + time	The selection of a strategy or combination of strategies chosen to achieve the objective. • Plan for implementation • Plan for monitoring implementation and results (for evaluation feedback)	The financial translation operation. • Is an estimate and can be changed	Putting the plan into operation. • The main reason we are here.	Collecting and reporting information. • Information to be collected is defined by the results and requirements of the objective	Passing judgment. • Judgments are formed using information from monitoring as part of the data base • Main purpose is to improve future performance (feedback is therefore vital)
	GOAL SETTING					
		RESULTS	**BUDGETING PLANS**	**RESOURCES**		

A Typical School Time Line for Evaluations

September	The school year starts! Results review documents prepared.
October	Results review finalized. Efficient and effective chart used.
November	Ongoing discussions re school plans with: • parents • business partners • staff.
December	School results developed.
January	Stakeholders input into results and plans (students, parents, staff, community).
February	Budget documents developed, presented.
March	Start all new ideas.
April-June	Fine tune all new ideas. Adjust for September.

Sample Questionnaire — Edmonton School District No. 7

Student Input on School Priorities

TEACHER ADVISOR PROGRAM — JANUARY

Student Input on School Priorities

Each year every school in the district sets priorities and makes plans for the following year. Student input is important to use — it is your school and your education we plan for each year. Teacher Advisors — please take some time to get input — it is important to us.

What do you think we should emphasize next year?

Write class suggestions on a sheet of paper & return it to Mrs. Stiles by January 14

YOUR IDEAS LAST YEAR

General Instruction Ideas

1. Extend the length between classes.
2. Develop a plan to encourage student support for school teams.
3. Develop a wider range of activities for students.
4. Supervision by adults all day in the cafeteria.
5. More supervision in the hallways — a concern about safety.
6. Make students carry ID's.
7. Full-year English courses.
8. Extend library hours.
9. Enforce smoking rule (a wider range of concerns here).
10. Simplify scholarship application process.
11. Improve general state of computers.
12. New dictionaries please.
13. New textbooks.

Facility Suggestions

1. Clean gym floor daily.
2. Clean ceilings — in progress.
3. Clean windows — in progress.
4. Paint the school — ongoing.
5. Improve student parking lot — to come later this year.

Concerns

1. Teachers leaving their classes during class.
2. Teachers inconsistent about "lates."
3. Cleanliness of school.
4. Cost of food in cafeteria.

YOUR IDEAS FOR NEXT YEAR

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Evaluation of a Collaborative Approach

Foothills School Division No. 38, The School Growth Process

Jim Brandon, Associate Superintendent

Our school growth process builds upon school effectiveness research, our successful experience in schools as well as our understanding of educational change theory. Central to the success of the program are four key principles:

- The school is the primary source of its renewal and growth.
- When school staffs openly reflect on their practices and engage in dialogue with parents and other community members, improved learning outcomes result.
- The insights of knowledgeable and tactful educators from beyond the building can have a significantly positive impact on the school=s improvement efforts.
- High expectations and ongoing school jurisdiction support are necessary for improvement efforts to be sustained.

With these principles in mind, we have designed a four-phase process based on clear expectations for schools.

Phase I Ongoing Focus on Improving Learning, Teaching and Schooling
  - Expectations for Schools
  - Annual School Plans
  - Annual School Reports

Phase II Internal Assessment
  - Reflection
  - Consultation
  - Self-Assessment Report

Phase III External Assessment — School Growth Team
  - Based on Self-Assessment
  - Observation
  - Conversation
  - Collaboration
  - School Growth Report

Phase IV Follow-Up
  - School-Division Planning
  - Staff Development Funding
  - Follow-Up Report to the Board
  - Return to Ongoing Improvement Phase

It is our strong belief that improvement is the major goal of evaluation. The challenge is to assist the school staff in their endeavour to provide continuously improving educational experiences for their students. The point must be emphasized that the school growth program is meant to be a comprehensive school assessment and is in no way intended to evaluate individual staff members.

At the heart of the school growth process are strong human connections. Mutual respect, open communication and high levels of trust lead to success in all human enterprise. These ingredients are basic to the school growth program. We believe that growth is optimized in an environment where all of the people associated with a school support and encourage its efforts to facilitate quality learning for its students.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Millarville Community School, Foothills School Division No. 38

Tony Hampshire, Principal

Introduction

This 1995–96 annual school report focuses upon the five goals set last fall following discussion with school staff, school council and our area superintendent. The following areas were viewed by all as important for Millarville Community School to focus upon this year:

- school philosophy and mission
- meeting learning needs with particular emphasis upon increasing elementary special needs students and new jr. high CTS courses
- enhancing the physical learning environment
- maintain/establish communication links
- improve the use of educational technology.

These areas of focus were then cross referenced to the divisional strategic plan, and stated in the form of the five annual goals with the specific success indicators that appear below. Attainment of each goal is evaluated in a commentary section entitled Goal Achievement describing specific progress and outcomes over the course of this year.

Goal 2: To continue to meet the learning needs of all students by:

- directing resources to focus upon increasing proportions of special needs students (moderate to severe learning and behavioural)
- implementation of three new career and technology studies courses in Grades 7 & 8 (information processing, enterprise & innovation, communications technology).

Alignment with FSD Strategic Goals:

FSD Goal #1: Meeting the Learning Needs of Students

FSD Goal #3: Building Trust and Confidence

Indicators of Success

- positive student growth in learning assistance and career and technology studies
- positive staff perceptions from annual divisional survey
- positive parent support from annual divisional survey.

Goal #2 Achievement

All success indicators for Goal 2 were met this year. Special needs students were a growing concern, as in recent years we have seen our special needs population continue to outpace overall enrollment growth patterns. This increase can be attributed to two factors. First, an unusually high number of students relocating to our area are arriving with special learning/behavioural needs and secondly, we are better diagnosing special needs in all students in the early grades. As a result, we have currently identified some 20 to 25 per cent of the student population who would benefit from, or indeed require, some form of learning assistance to meet intellectual, behavioural, psychological needs and attentional deficits.

For some students, interventions merely involve instructional adjustments such as curriculum differentiation, while for mild/moderate needs, a formal independent program plan is required (we wrote 20 IPP's this year) along with the provision of a learning and/or student assistant. At the moderate/severe level, we now have over a dozen students requiring a full range of support including an IPP, daily para-professional assistance, prescribed medication and ongoing services from our family school liaison worker and/or REACH psychologists. An additional complication is that six of them are all in the same class.

To meet the special needs challenge, additional time was devoted to the learning support program, diagnosis and IPP writing was improved, and parent conferencing/communication increased. Although divisional resources were diminished, we still received excellent support from learning services, REACH, and our family school liaison worker.

The results have been encouraging, with all learning support students at least passing provincial achievement tests and documented growth clearly evident in all IPP's. Strong parent and staff support is provided for students with special learning needs, and parents generally agreed that Millarville Community School helps and supports their children's learning needs (76 per cent), promotes high standards of achievement (79 per cent) and provides quality learning experiences (88 per cent).

The implementation of three new career and technology (CTS) courses at the jr. high level was also successful. Students in enterprise and innovation displayed leadership and innovation in numerous projects over the year, most notably an outstanding multi-media presentation to both our school council and Senator Riley staff and students on what a learning community is and how it functions (happily, their perceptions agreed with those of the staff)!. Students in communications technology and the two sections of information processing likewise demonstrated significant growth in applications of learning technology involving word processing, databases, research, multi-media and video presentations. All these courses will continue next year, with the benefit of additional technology (see Goal 5 below).

Goal 4: To ensure that strong communication links are established/maintained with:

- new area trustee
- new school council
- increased number of learning assistance families
- MCS parents.

Alignment with FSD Strategic Goals:

FSD Goal #3: Building Trust and Confidence

FSD Goal #1: Meeting the Learning Needs of Students

Indicators of Success

- frequent, open and constructive communication exists with area trustee
- School council meets the mandate set in FSD policy and Alberta Education regulations
- comprehensive parent communication exists in learning assistance program
- positive staff perceptions from annual surveys
- positive feedback from parents on annual surveys.

Goal #4 Achievement

All success indicators for Goal 4 were met this year. Communication and rapport with our new area trustee were excellent, and the school community has confidence that a strong and informed advocate for MCS is at the board table. Our school council met all policy mandates and functioned smoothly, providing valued support and advice on a wide variety of school programs and activities. As detailed above, excellent parent communication in the learning support program was evident and staff support for this program is strong.

Similarly, divisional surveys confirmed that communication with MCS parents was effective, with 79 per cent agreeing that they were informed about student progress; 88 per cent had opportunities to voice their opinions on school matters; and 97 per cent agreed that they were informed about school programs and activities.

Additional Achievements 1995–96

Beyond the specific goals described above, there are several additional achievements that are worthy of mention in this annual report. These included:

- receiving the Calgary Educational Partnership Foundation's Excellence Award in curriculum enrichment for our work over the years with ESSO Resources Quirk Creek
- annual survey results revealing that 82 per cent of parents and 100 per cent of school staff were satisfied with the quality of education provided at Millarville Community School.
- preliminary results from 1996 provincial achievement tests suggesting that our results this past year may be our strongest yet. All Grade 3 students met provincial standards in language and math with class average scores in the 80 per cent range, and most achieved the standard of excellence on both tests. Similarly all Grade 6 students met provincial expectations with class averages of 75–80 per cent, and many achieved the standard of excellence in science, math, language arts and social studies
- Our jr. high girls winning the divisional volleyball championship
- Staging two epic Christmas concerts, a dessert theatre, and having eight students invited to perform with the divisional youth choir
- Maintaining a strong ECS program with two beginning teachers in its first year under Foothills School Division.

Summary

Millarville Community School has successfully met or exceeded four of the five goals set for the 1995–96 school year, and had capital building expansion plans not been delayed, I am confident that we would have achieved Goal 3 as well. Overall, Millarville Community School continued its tradition of excellence within a vibrant, innovative learning community characterized by high levels of student achievement, community and parent involvement and professional collegiality. As a principal and a parent, I am privileged to be part of the success of this school.

Please note that this is only a portion of the report.

SBDM Practices in Alberta: Evaluation Survey for SBDM, Grasslands Regional Division No. 6

The following questionnaire is for teachers: a similar one was developed for other groups.

Please complete the following questions using the scale:
1 – very satisfied; 2 B satisfied; 3 B dissatisfied; 4 B very dissatisfied; 5 B don=t know

Since the introduction of SBDM in GRD how satisfied are you?

	Very Satisfied 1	Satisfied 2	Dissatisfied 3	Very Dissatisfied 4	Don't Know 5
1. That your school=s stakeholders have developed a vision of what they want for their students?					
2. That you have been meaningfully involved in the development of that vision?					
3. That your school has developed goals that attempt to fulfil that vision?					
4. That your school=s three-year plan and budget are being used to achieve those goals?					
5. That most teachers have a good understanding of how SBDM is meant to work in GRD?					
6. That your school has developed a process for involving stakeholders in decision-making?					
7. That SBDM has led to more innovative ways of solving problems at the school level?					
8. With your understanding of the new role of the central office administrative staff since the implementation of SBDM?					
9. That the decisions made by the central office administrative staff are consistent with this new role?					
10. With your understanding of the new role of the school board since the implementation of SBDM?					
11. That the decisions made by school board are consistent with this new role?					
12. That in your school, SBDM is improving the quality of education for students?					
13. That parents have meaningful representation on your school=s SBDM team?					
14. That teachers have meaningful representation on your school=s SBDM team?					
15. That the support staff have meaningful representation on your school=s SBDM team?					
16. That students have meaningful representation on your school=s SBDM team?					

	Very Satisfied 1	Satisfied 2	Dissatisfied 3	Very Dissatisfied 4	Don't Know 5
17. That teachers at your school are committed to the concept of SBDM?					
18. That change has occurred in the way in which decisions are being made since SBDM has been implemented in your school?					
19. That your school=s SBDM team encourages open communications with its stakeholders?					
20. That your school=s SBDM team actually practises open communications with its stakeholders.					
21. That with SBDM, your school is better able to determine how your resources are allocated?					
22. That student learning has the highest priority in the decisions that are made by your SBDM team?					
23. That the important decisions at your school are made by the SBDM team?					
24. That conflict at your school is well handled?					
25. That the competition for resources has had a negative impact on your SBDM team=s ability to make quality decisions?					
26. That the inservice which has been provided on SBDM has been adequate?					
27. That SBDM has been implemented in GRD the way in which Alberta Education intended?					
28. That SBDM has been implemented in your school in the way in which GRD intended?					

Since the introduction of SBDM in GRD do you feel that C
1 B would like more; 2 B is about right; 3 B would like less; 4 B don=t know.

	Like More	About Right	Like Less	Don=t Know
1. That most parents are happy with the amount of representation that they have on the SBDM team?				
2. That most teachers are happy with the amount of representation that they have on the SBDM team?				
3. That most support staff members are happy with the amount of representation that they have on the SBDM team?				
4. That most students are happy with the amount of representation that they have on the SBDM team?				

The last questions are open ended. Please take time to comment on:

1. What changes would you suggest could be made to the SBDM model that would improve the quality of the educational decisions that are made in GRD, or in your school? (Assuming that increased resources are not an option.)

2. What kind of inservice would you suggest is required to make SBDM work better in GRD?

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

SBDM Practices in Alberta:
Elk Island Public Schools Regional Division No. 14

Elementary Parent Satisfaction Survey

Dear Parent:

Alberta Education, the board of trustees and the superintendent of Elk Island Public Schools need to know how satisfied you are with particular aspects of the school division. The results from annual surveys of students, parents, staff and partners will be used to help measure the progress of certain provincial, district and school education goals.

In order to ensure confidentiality, your sealed response will only be opened by the research assistant. The final report will contain only statistical summaries and anonymous comments, without identification of individual respondents. **Please mark your responses with a `T` and return the survey to your local school in the enclosed envelope by April 18. Please check only one response, the one that best describes how you feel. Thank you for completing this survey. Your *opinions* are important to us.**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
1.	The school educationally prepared my child to enter the grade/program he or she is currently in.					
2.	My child is being challenged to do his or her best.					
3.	My child is learning to take responsibility for his or her own actions					
4.	I am satisfied with the quality of information available to me about my child's educational progress and achievement.					
5.	I have confidence in the quality of instruction my child receives.					
6.	I am satisfied that discipline is handled in a fair and reasonable manner in my child's school.					
7.	I am satisfied with the quality of leadership in my child's school.					
8.	I am satisfied with the quality of leadership and service provided by central office.					
9.	I am satisfied with the leadership provided by the board of trustees.					
10.	My child's school is clean and well maintained.					
11.	I am satisfied with the role of parents in the school division.					
12.	I am satisfied with how money is spent in my child's school.					
13.	I am satisfied that teachers provide the help and support my child needs.					
14.	I am satisfied with the number of program choices available in Elk Island Public Schools.					

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		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
15.	I am satisfied with the access my child has to technology/computers and other related resources.					
16.	I am satisfied with the integration of technology/computer skills and programs into my child's courses.					
17.	I am satisfied with the counselling services at my child's school.					
18.	I am satisfied with the library services at my child's school.					
19.	I am satisfied that the school environment is safe in my child's school.					
20.	I am satisfied that provisions are made to meet my child's special needs. If Not Applicable, check here "					
21.	I am satisfied with the quality of education that my child is receiving at his or her school.					
22.	I am satisfied with the opportunities to be involved in the school council and the decision making process about policies, programs and budgeting.					
23.	I have been involved in the decision making process about issues such as educational programs and budgeting in schools in my community.					
24.	I am satisfied with how money is spent by the Elk Island Public School Division					
25.	I am satisfied that I have the opportunity to be involved in decisions about Elk Island Public School Division.					
26.	I am satisfied that the Elk Island Public School System is well run.					
27.	I am satisfied that my child has the opportunity to be involved at school in activities outside the classroom: e.g., choir, intramurals.					
28.	I think the rights and responsibilities of citizenship are reinforced in our schools.					
29.	I think high school graduates in Alberta have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to enter the workplace.					
30.	I think high school graduates in Alberta have the knowledge, skills and attitudes for entry into post secondary education and training.					

31. What is the most important issue facing Elk Island Public Schools?

32. What do you value the most in Elk Island Public Schools?

Please read the Mission Statement, Belief Statements, and Strategic Goals on the following page and answer questions 33, 34 and 35.

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Mission Statement

The mission of Elk Island Public Schools is to achieve educational excellence in preparing students for change and future challenges.

Belief Statements

- All students can learn and experience success.
- All students have the right to access a quality public education program.
- All students have a responsibility to maximize their learning by striving for excellence.
- People are our most important educational resource.
- The educational system must develop responsible and creative decision makers who demonstrate ethical and moral behaviour.
- A quality education contributes to the emotional, intellectual, physical and social development of the student.
- Learning is a lifelong process in which schooling plays a fundamental role.
- Education is the shared responsibility of the student, school, home, community, government and the private sector.
- Schooling must be offered in a safe learning environment where individuals are respected, valued and affirmed.
- All practices within our system must reflect responsible use of public funds.
- Our school system must be innovative, flexible and continuously improving to meet the challenges presented by change.
- Problems and challenges present opportunities for positive growth and development.
- Integrity, honesty, tolerance and responsible behaviour must be fundamental in all that we do.

Strategic Goals

- Relevant, High Quality Programs and Services: Provide students with high quality programs and services that are responsive to a wide range of individual student needs.
- Optimize Resources: Utilize available resources to maximum student advantage.
- Effective Use of Technology: Use technology to enhance instruction and school system management.
- Public Support: Strengthen public involvement in and support for our educational system.
- Manage Restructuring: Manage effectively the challenges associated with government restructuring.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
33.	I believe the mission of the Elk Island Public School Division is appropriate.					
34.	I support the values (belief statements) of the school division.					
35.	I believe the strategic goals of this school division to be important ones at this time.					

Name (Optional) _______________

Workshop Idea #14: Assessing Progress and Reporting

Purpose: to examine ways to assess a school's program

to examine ways to report a school's progress to the school community and the public at large

to use the assessment to improve teaching and learning

Materials: the school's educational plan, *Guide for Developing School-Based Three-Year Education Plan and Annual Education Results Report* — Alberta Education, collected data (from each of the goals), handouts, chart paper, pens, tape

Time: 2–3 hours

Introduction

Review each of the goals in the school's education plan. What were you trying to accomplish? Do a general analysis C individually on a scale of 1–5 indicate the progress. Give at least two reasons for the assessment.

1	2	3	4	5
Not Started				Totally Accomplished

Many jurisdictions have satisfaction surveys. Pages 19–24 of this chapter are two examples.

Review Data Collection

For each goal, what data were collected? How was it collected? What were the indicators of success? What other pieces of information need to be collected? Worksheets may be used to guide the work. Review all the possible information.

Possible data:

- Satisfaction surveys
- Levels of involvement (Worksheet #2, page 29 of this chapter)
- Student data attendance, participation, awards, achievement, surveys
- Specific concrete projects
- Newsletters/other publications.

Planning for Next Year

- What goals are ongoing? Which ones are accomplished? What new directions are suggested? Were these goals the right ones? Why? Why not?
- What can we do differently?

Reporting of Progress

Pages 15–18 of this chapter gives an example of an annual report. An outline is provided in Alberta Education's *The Guide for Developing School Board Three-Year Education Plans and Annual Results Reports.* It contains information about content and format.

- Plan reporting procedures for school council, staff meeting and community meeting.
- Use the school or community newsletter to highlight the progress in the annual report.

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Workshop Idea #14 — Worksheet #1

1. Evaluation of SBDM in School: The Basic Questions

1. Why are we evaluating? Clearly state the reasons and also the audience.

2. What are we evaluating? Describe in some detail the program/process or changes that are implemented.

3. What data should we collect and what are effective means to collect it? What processes? What instruments?

4. How shall we report? To whom?

Workshop #14 — Worksheet #2
Level of Involvement

Issue: ______________________________

Stakeholder	Information	Input	Discussion	Decision-Maker

What will you monitor?

•

•

•

Indicators

Workshop #14 — Worksheet # 3
Accountability

Management Purposes	Criteria Developed to Judge These	Responsibility for Providing Criteria
To manage the Edmonton Public Schools to meet district standards related to: • Student Performance • Student Attitudes • Staff Performance • Staff Attitudes • Parent Attitudes • Community Attitudes • Physical Assets • Finances		

Workshop Idea #15: Assessing SBDM in a School or Jurisdiction

Purpose: to develop a plan for assessing SBDM

to use the assessment to improve SBDM at the school or jurisdiction level

Materials: manuals and policy on SBDM, survey data

Time: 2–3 hours

Introduction

- Previous to this working session, conduct a survey of all participants. The example from Grasslands School Division on page 19–20 of this chapter may serve as a sample. It can be modified for each of the stakeholder groups.
- Use the transition activity described in Chapter Two, page 45 to get a feeling about the participants' sense of progress. Use this to review the purpose for SBDM.

Analysis of Data

- Examine the survey data. What questions show the greatest level of dissatisfaction. Discuss these and try to determine the factors that have led to dissatisfaction.
- The checklist in Chapter Two, page 47 may also be used to evaluate progress.

Planning for Next Year

- Choose three or four key elements that need improvement.
- Organize ad hoc workgroups to work on each element.

Reporting and Celebration

Report to all individual and group participants who were involved in SBDM.

Chapter 9

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers About School-Based Decision Making

School-Based Decision Making Resource Guide:

Focus on Teaching and Learning

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers About School-Based Decision Making

Chapter Nine

1. What is school-based decision making?

(Chapter One)

"School-based decision making" involves the whole school community in teaching and learning in order to ensure high levels of student achievement. School-based decision making is a process through which major decisions are made at the school level about policies, instructional programs and services, and how funds are allocated to support them; and

"Community" means a school's students, their parents and other community-based support elements available to the school.

— Alberta Education Policy (1996 01 09)

2. Why should we implement school-based decision making?

(Chapters Two, Four, Five)

There are a range of reasons including:

- To improve learning and teaching.
- To formally recognize the expertise and competence of those who work in schools.
- To give more teachers, parents, community members and students input into decisions.
- To bring financial and instructional resources in line with instructional goals developed in schools.
- To nurture and build new leaders.
- To bring better service and programs to students.
- To improve the quantity and quality of communication.
- To develop new ways of doing our work.

However, the most important reason is to improve student learning.

3. What decisions should a school staff make?

(Chapters Four, Five)

Each school staff should make the decision about the areas for decision making, but in general they will most likely be involved in decisions that directly influence how teachers teach and how students learn. All staff, as well as school council, may be included in decisions about school vision, school improvement plans, school goals, school budgets, school policy about discipline, student evaluation and professional development programs. Committees or teams of staff may be involved with curriculum and resource issues, team teaching arrangements, and school organization.

All decisions are not shared decisions; not everyone is included in every decision.

4. What decisions rest with central office?

(Chapters Two, Four, Five)

Decisions that have an impact on the entire system usually are the responsibility of central office. A sample of these areas:

- transportation
- program coordination
- printing
- budget process
- purchasing
- major building initiatives
- negotiating contracts
- personnel systems
- data processing
- systems coordination.

5. What is the role of the school council?

(Chapter Four)

Section 17 of the *School Act* recognizes the rights of parents and the school community to have meaningful involvement in the education of their children through school councils. School councils are responsible to the parents and the communities they serve.

School councils play an important role by providing advice, consultation and assistance to school principals and trustees particularly in the area of policy.

6. What is the role of the board of trustees within school-based decision making?

(Chapter Four)

The role of the board of trustees includes development of policy and parameters, collective agreements, district vision and goals. The role changes to one of enabling and supporting the decision making of the sites in the jurisdiction.

7. What is the role of the superintendent within school-based decision making?

(Chapters Three, Five)

The role of the superintendent is to provide leadership for the implementation of SBDM in the jurisdiction, to support the decisions of the sites, and to coordinate and communicate with all participants and sites. This involves facilitating and supporting the work of the schools.

8. What is the role of the school principal?

(Chapters Two, Three, Four, Five, Six)

The role of the principal is to provide leadership for the implementation of SBDM at the school level. This involves facilitating and enabling the leadership role of staff, school council and students. An important aspect of the role is to work collaboratively with the school council and the community.

9. What is consensus and how does it work?

(Chapters Three, Five)

Consensus is a process in which two or more people arrive at a decision that they can support. True or pure consensus means all people work cooperatively to reach a decision that they all can support. "Sufficient" consensus has come to mean that after a real discussion about an issue in which all people have had an opportunity to express their views and be listened to, if a small number of people are not in agreement, such disagreement cannot hold up the majority taking the action.

Although the consensus process takes a great deal of time, this time is often made up by the shorter time required for implementation of decisions which have support and commitment.

10. Who is accountable for a shared decision?

(Chapters Four, Five)

Involvement and ownership generate responsibility and trust. This, of course, operates within Section 15 of the *School Act* which outlines responsibilities of the principal.

The people involved in a collaborative decision learn to share the responsibility and the accountability for the decision.

11. What if people don't what to be involved in school-based decision making?

(Chapters Five, Six)

A climate of trust and involvement takes time to develop, we must work initially with the people who are committed and knowledgeable, and gradually attract others as they find reasons to be involved.

12. How can we involve more staff in school-based decision making?

(Chapters Three, Four, Five, Six)

Generally, the process must focus on their prime concern — what happens in the classroom.

Specific activities that facilitate involvement:

- provide time for the tasks
- provide inservice if it is needed
- ask them about their concerns/interests
- develop ad hoc task forces with short time lines
- recognize their expertise
- value the diversity in the group
- reward achievement and involvement.

13. How do we find time for school based-decision making?

(Chapters Five, Six)

It usually is a matter of using time differently:

- use budget to buy time in the form of release time
- timetable to facilitate team planning
- team teach and other creative ways to free-up groups for specific tasks
- non-teaching administrators take classes for committee or team members
- use volunteers with appropriate teacher supervision
- stop doing some things that are not a priority (based on school education plans and goals).

14. Will school-based decision making reduce the cost of education?

(Chapters Six, Seven)

No. It should reduce inefficiencies, resulting in money spent more wisely. It provides the opportunity to reallocate scarce resources to meet local priorities. But school-based decision making will not necessarily save money. The costs of education are not affected by this change in the structure of a district.

15. Will local decision making make schools innovative?

(Chapter Six)

It certainly has the power to allow schools to make innovative changes. Local school-based decision making offers more opportunities to be innovative, but that does not mean that all schools will come forward with sparkling new ideas for experimentation. Some will take advantage of their freedom to experiment. Many may not because no incentive is provided to be innovative, only the freedom to do so.

16. Are schools more able to develop their own curricula?

(Chapter Six)

Major curriculum decisions are mandated by the province. However, school staffs may have some discretionary resources that permit them to allocate funds for classroom curriculum development if they wish.

17. Does each school or site need to have a process for school-based decision making?

(Chapters Two, Four, Six)

Each school must develop a process or model that is appropriate to its situation. The jurisdiction should establish a common set of guidelines which will then be adapted and modified at each site. Each school jurisdiction is required to have a policy for SBDM.

18. What are the parameters or boundaries for school-based decision making?

(Chapters Two, Five)

Jurisdictions at the outset of the process of SBDM should develop the parameters (collaboratively) for decisions that will be made at the school level. These could include:

- collaborate with central office, other schools and peers
- use of effective research and assessment techniques
- stay within district vision and goal
- stay within or identify necessary changes in collective agreements, curriculum regulations, provincial laws
- use a shared decision-making process.

19. Using a shared decision-making process, what happens if a decision cannot be reached?

(Chapters Three, Five)

The administration may have to make an interim decision using all the information collected. The working group may continue to work together on the issue toward consensus.

20. How can we ensure that individuals and small groups are represented in shared decision making?

(Chapters Two, Four, Five)

All teams and decision-making groups should include as many representatives of all partners as possible. The representation should reflect the make-up of each partner group; e.g., school administrators from large, small, rural and urban schools. It is important to ensure that minority views are listened to with respect; attempts are made to accommodate the minority view and that all decisions are based on a process that includes involving the whole community, thorough study by the teams, evaluation and review.

21. What happens if the school is in conflict with a district policy? Is it possible to change the policy?

(Chapters Two, Four, Five)

There should be a conflict resolution or process in place. A possible procedure could involve the following steps:

- notify superintendent about the policy, describing the restrictive nature and a recommended change.
- hold meetings to explore ways of working with the policy or changing it
- make recommendation to the board
- uphold the board decision — grant variance, revise policy or reject proposal.

22. How do we get parents and community involved in school-based decision making?

(Chapter Four)

The school council has a responsibility to coordinate parent and community involvement. There are key areas for parent involvement: school vision, school policy and school improvement planning. Communicate that involvement is welcome. Have parent representatives on committees. Try to recognize times that are appropriate for parents — perhaps during the school day is not.

23. Does school-based decision making result in different curriculum and teaching decisions?

(Chapters Four, Six)

Research shows that when staff are involved in decisions about curriculum or instruction, they often make different decisions than those made by central office staff. This is the basic rationale for SBDM–those closest to the decision should be empowered to make the decision.

24. Are there some decisions that are not appropriate for staff to make?

(Chapters Four, Six)

Staff should not make decisions about personnel matters.

25. Does school-based decision making lead to better decisions?

(Chapter Five)

Although school-based decision making is based on the premise that those closest to the issue will make the best decision, several conditions are necessary. SBDM will lead to better decisions if the participants have an accurate database, the necessary resources, necessary skills, trust and commitment to finding the solution.

26. Will school-based decision making alter the role of principal?

(Chapter Four)

It will give the principal more authority over a broader range of issues including personnel. It will make the principal more accountable and will change the workload. It will involve a change in the nature of the role — a role that supports and facilitates the leadership role of others at the school.

27. Will school-based decision making increase staff workloads?

(Chapters Four, Six)

Quite possibly. Many staff will be asked to participate in the educational planning process of their schools. When they accept this challenge, initial demands on time will grow and stress may be created as they help decide on priorities and amounts of money to be spent on what their schools want. However, in the long term, the decision may lead to more effective ways for learning and teaching which will in fact save time and enable more effective use of resources.

28. Will school-based decision making enable staff to improve?

(Chapter Six)

It has the potential to do this by giving staff a say in the resources that schools and classrooms need to help students learn. School-based decision making has the potential to help staff become more effective, as they have a say in developing their own professional development program. Staff that are challenged to make real decisions about learning and teaching will be motivated to make change.

29. What is the relationship between district priorities and school needs and goals?

(Chapters Three, Six, Seven)

There is obviously a close relationship — district priorities should influence school priorites and, school priorities help to determine district priorities. A two-way set of influences is at work.

30. How will we know if school-based decision making has been successful?

(Chapter Eight)

SBDM will be judged successful when:

- decisions focus on conditions that enhance teaching and learning
- more people are involved in making better decisions
- people trust one another to make good decisions
- people are more skilled in making decisions
- a positive, collaborative climate exists within the school community
- public support for schools in particular and education in general increases
- it fosters sustained school improvements.

Chapter 10

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Focus on Teaching and Learning

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Tape 1 (30 min). *Inviting the community into schools.* Identifies barriers to parental involvement and suggests strategies to overcome them.
Tape 2 (30 min). *Bringing schools to the community.* Offers ideas to make the school a part of the community — sharing information and policies, opportunities for discussion and the welcoming of diversity.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. (1993). *Managing change*, Video Journal II:4, presented by Michael Fullan and John R. Champlin.
Tape 1 (30 min). *The dynamics of change.* Describes the process of change; educators must choose to manage change or risk it being thrust upon them.
Tape 2 (30 min). *Planning for change.* How change in one area of a school system ultimately affects every other area.

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The benefits of a shared approach to decision making on curriculum, instruction and management policies are explained.

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Tape 1 (30 min). *Bring democracy back to school.* Effective school reform takes place within a democratic framework. Discusses the importance of keeping the focus on instructional, not administrative decisions.
Tape 2 (30 min). *Shared governance for effective education.* Three dimensions of effective democratic schools, a covenant that defines values and beliefs, a charter or plan, and a critical study process are examined.

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A positive, personal vision gives direction and meaning to our lives and our work. Barker shares the development of his personal vision.